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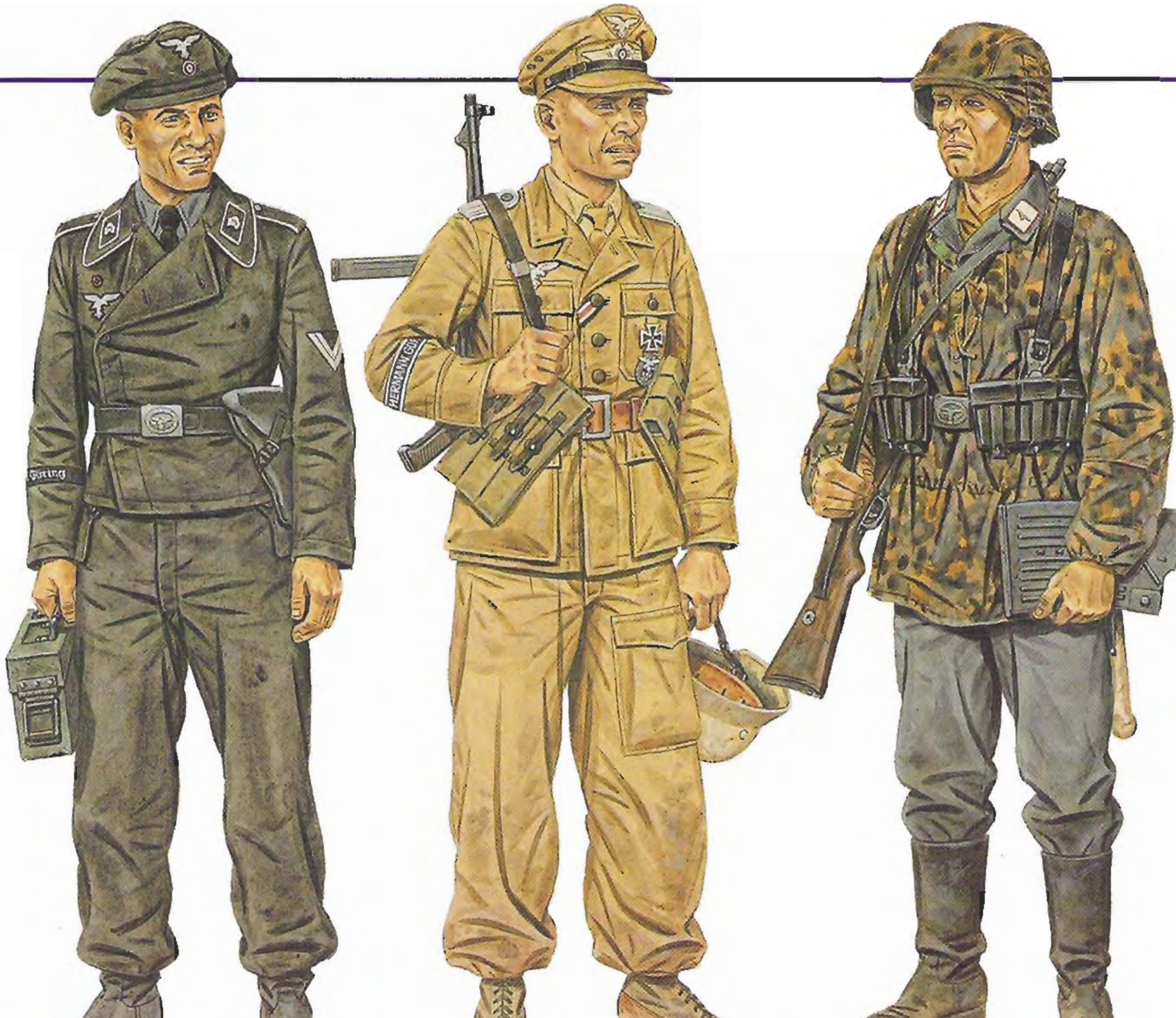
The 'Hermann Göring' Division


Göring
HERMANN GÖ

Gordon Williamson • Illustrated by Stephen Andrew

GORDON WILLIAMSON was born in 1951 and currently works for the Scottish Land Register. He spent seven years with the Military Police TA and has published a number of books and articles on the decorations of the Third Reich and their winners. He is author of a number of World War II titles for Osprey.

STEPHEN ANDREW was born in 1961 in Glasgow, where he still lives and works. An entirely self-taught artist, he worked in advertising and design agencies before going freelance in 1993. Military history is his passion, and in the past few years he has established himself as a respected artist in this field. Since 1997 he has illustrated many Men-at-Arms titles including series on the German, Italian and Japanese armies of World War II.

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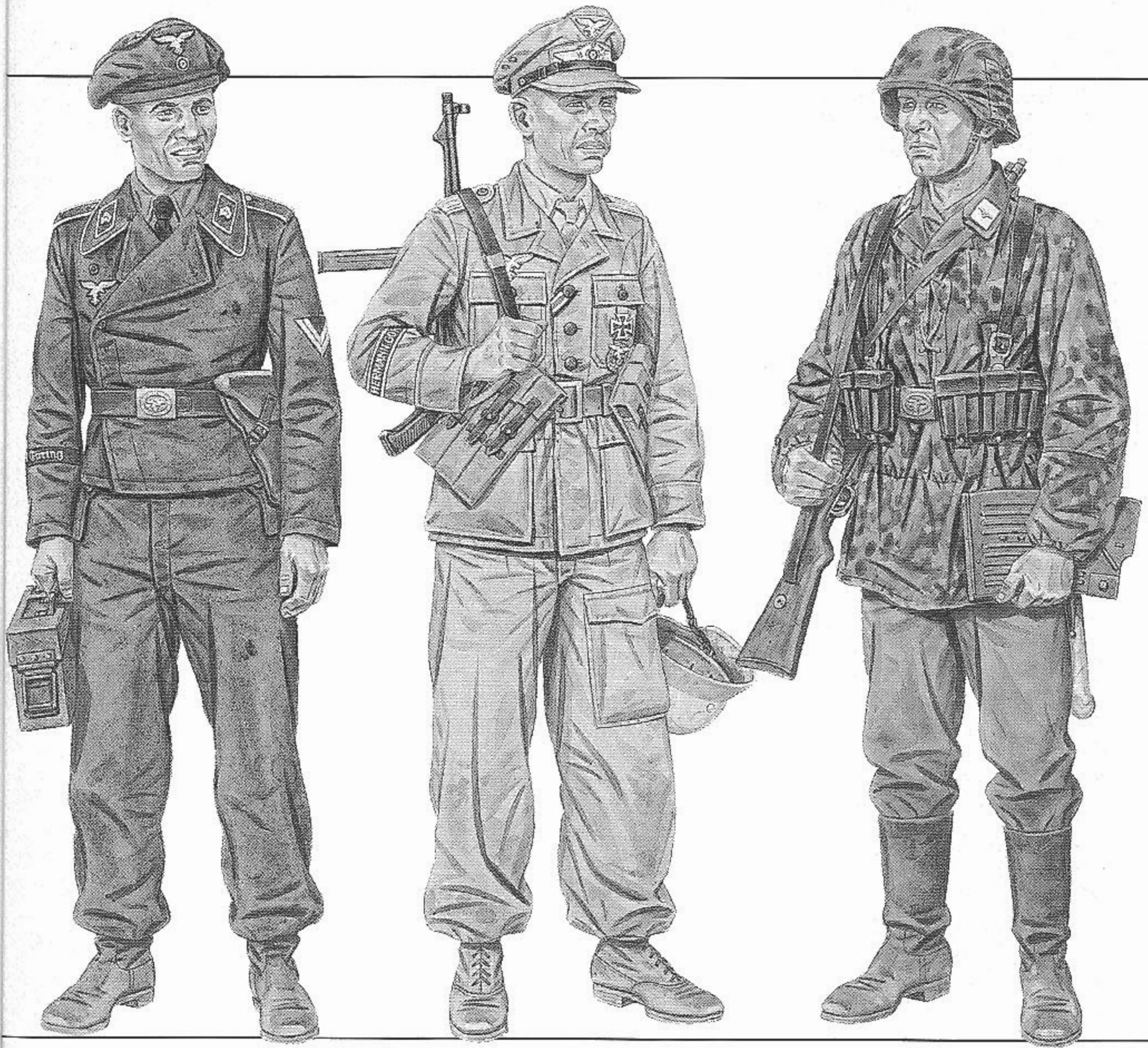
Göring
HERMANN GÖRING

Gordon Williamson • Illustrated by Stephen Andrew

Series editor Martin Windrow

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Stephen Andrew
87 Ellisland, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow G66 2US, Scotland

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THE 'HERMANN GÖRING' DIVISION

INTRODUCTION

Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, Minister for Aviation and commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe, and founder of the Landespolizeigruppe 'General Göring' from which ultimately grew the Fallschirm-Panzerkorps 'Hermann Göring'. His personal uniform is cut at the collar like the Luftwaffe *Waffenrock*; above his Pour le Mérite and Knight's Cross he displays his unique award of the huge Grand Cross of the Knight's Cross.

In each branch of the German ground forces during World War II there was one major combat unit which more than any other could truly be considered to have earned the title of an élite, and which was allowed to grow and develop into a much larger and more powerful force than was ever originally envisaged. In the Army this was the Infanterie-Regiment 'Grossdeutschland'; in the Waffen-SS, the 'Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler'; and in the Luftwaffe it was, without doubt, the Regiment 'General Göring'.

Hermann Göring was immensely proud of the unit which bore his name, and justifiably so. This force grew from its humble origins as a 400-man police detachment into a full armoured corps, and developed an enviable reputation for combat reliability.

The Luftwaffe was effectively a 'Nazi' creation, being formed in 1935, two years after Hitler had come to power: Hitler himself once declared, 'I have a National Socialist air force, a Prussian army and a Christian navy'. Despite the 'National Socialist' tag, the premier ground combat unit of the Luftwaffe – though it no doubt had many convinced party supporters within its ranks – fought a relatively clean war, unlike many other combat units which owed strong political allegiances. Indeed, one of the 'Hermann Göring' Division's greatest claims to fame during World War II was not a military exploit at all, but the saving from almost certain destruction of the historic treasures of the Benedictine abbey at Monte Cassino.

PRE-WAR ORIGINS

In February 1933, immediately after the National Socialist party was voted into power, Captain Hermann Göring, a Great War fighter ace and long-time collaborator with Adolf Hitler, was appointed to the position of Prussian Minister of the Interior, a post that gave him control of the Prussian State Police and brought him general's rank. He immediately set about creating a new detachment, to be staffed from policemen whose reliability and loyalty to the National Socialist regime was unquestionable. Just over 400 men were taken on strength of the new unit, to be commanded by Major der Schutzpolizei Wecke. The unit, based in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin – a notoriously left-wing working-class area – was named after its commander, as Polizei-Abteilung zbV Wecke ('Police Special Duties Battalion Wecke'). Within just one month the new unit was in action against armed Communist cells in Berlin. In July 1933 the detachment was renamed as

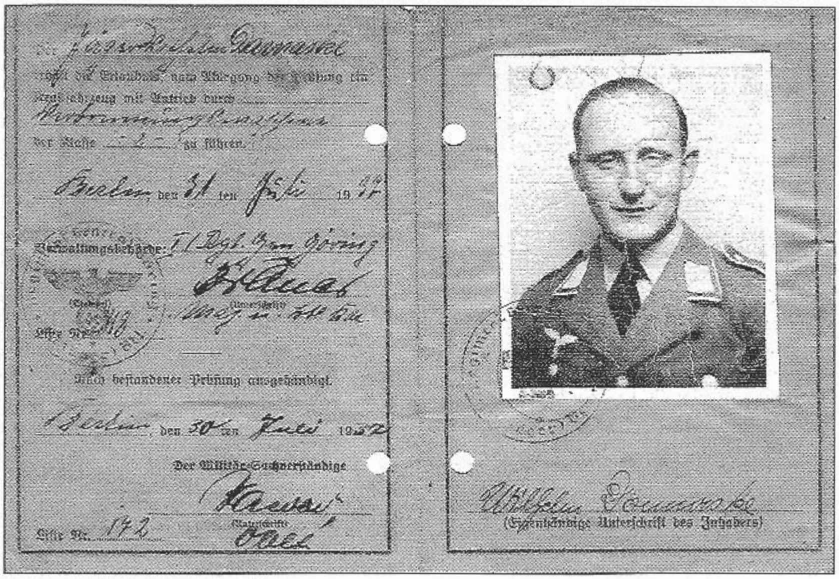
Landespolizeigruppe Wecke ('State Police Group Wecke'); and shortly thereafter once again as Landespolizeigruppe General Göring.

The detachment grew rapidly under Göring's patronage, and in April 1935 it was formally expanded to regimental status as the Regiment 'General Göring', under the command of Oberstleutnant der Landespolizei Friedrich Wilhelm Jakoby. Just six months after its creation, Göring had his regiment transferred from the Polizei – control of which would pass ultimately to his bitter rival, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler – into the newly formed Luftwaffe, of which Göring was named commander-in-chief. At that time the regiment consisted of the following elements:

Regimentstab (HQ staff)
Musikkorps (band)
I. & II.Jäger-Bataillonen (light infantry)
13.Kradschützen-Kompanie (motorcyclists)
15.Pionier-Kompanie (engineers)
Reiterzug (mounted troop)
Nachrichtenzug (signals platoon)

At the time when Regiment 'General Göring' was transferred to the air force, orders were given for the raising of a paratroop battalion. All volunteers for this unit, which was heavily oversubscribed by eager applicants, were concentrated in I.Jäger-Bataillon. At the end of 1937 attempts to disguise the intended use of these troops were abandoned and the volunteers, along with 15.Pionier-Kompanie, were renamed as IV. Fallschirmschützen-Bataillon ('Parachute Rifle Battalion'). These units remained part of Regiment 'General Göring' until March 1938, when they were detached and sent to the training grounds at Stendal to form the cadre for the first of the Luftwaffe's paratroop units, I./Fallschirmjäger-Regiment 1.

The Regiment 'General Göring' – like the Army's élite Infanterie-Regiment 'Gross-deutschland' and the premier Waffen-SS regiment 'Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler' – recruited throughout Germany, accepting only candidates of the highest calibre and in peak physical condition. They occupied a brand new purpose-built barracks complex at Berlin-Reinickendorf, constructed to the highest standards and with the most modern of facilities. The complex boasted over 120 buildings and included gymnasia, swimming pools both outdoor and indoor, sports areas, and even its own post office. 'General Göring' troops, in their distinctive uniforms with white collar patches and special unit cuffband, soon became a regular sight on the streets of Berlin.



erhält die Erlaubnis, nach Ablegung der Prüfung ein Kraftfahrzeug mit Antrieb durch
[illegible]
der Klasse 2 zu führen.

Berlin, den 31 ten Juli 1937

Verwaltungsbehörde: I/Rgt. Gen. Göring
(Siegel)
(Unterschrift)
Liste Nr.

Nach bestandener Prüfung ausgehändigt.

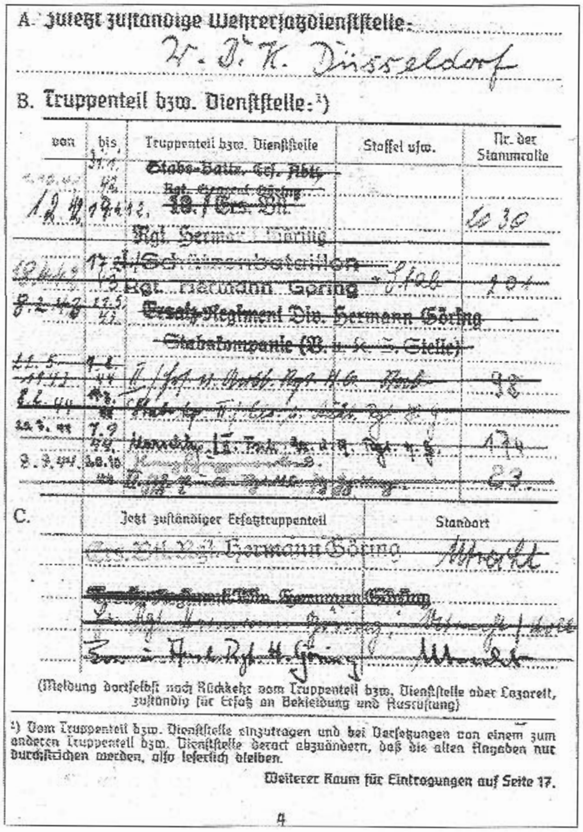
Berlin, den 30 ten Juli 1937

Der Militär-Sachverständige

Liste Nr. 142

Wilhelm Damaske
(Eigenhändige Unterschrift des Inhabers)

The driving permit of Jäger Wilhelm Damaske from I.Abteilung, Regiment 'General Göring'; these documents were printed on tough oilcloth material. Note the white edge-piping to the collar of his four-pocket service tunic, and the distinctive white collar patches. (Private collection)



A. Zuletzt zuſtändige Wehrerſatzdienſtſtelle: W. B. K. Düſſeldorf

B. Truppenteil bzw. Dienſtſtelle:¹)

von	bis	Truppenteil bzw. Dienſtſtelle	Staffel uſw.	Nr. der Stammrolle
[illegible]	31.1.42	~~Stabs-Battr. Erſ. Abt.~~ ~~Rgt. General Göring~~		
1.2.42	19.4.42	~~10./Erſ. Btl.~~ ~~Rgt. Hermann Göring~~		630
[illegible]	17.5.42	~~I./Schützenbataillon~~ ~~Rgt. Hermann Göring~~	~~Stab~~	~~101~~
~~8.2.43~~	~~17.5.43~~	~~Erſatz-Regiment Div. Hermann Göring~~ ~~Stabskompanie (W. u. K. S. Stelle)~~		
~~21.5.43~~	~~7.2.44~~	~~[illegible] Rgt. H.G.~~		~~98~~
~~8.2.44~~	[illegible]	~~[illegible]~~		
22.?.44	7.9.44	~~[illegible]~~		~~174~~
8.9.44	20.10.44	~~[illegible]~~		~~83~~

C.

Jetzt zuſtändiger Erſatztruppenteil	Standort
~~Erſ. Btl. Rgt. Hermann Göring~~	~~Utrecht~~
~~Erſatz-Regiment Div. Hermann Göring~~	
~~[illegible]~~	~~[illegible]~~
~~[illegible] Rgt. H. Göring~~	~~[illegible]~~

(Meldung dortſelbſt nach Rückkehr vom Truppenteil bzw. Dienſtſtelle oder Lazarett, zuſtändig für Erſatz an Bekleidung und Ausrüſtung)

¹) Vom Truppenteil bzw. Dienſtſtelle einzutragen und bei Verſetzungen von einem zum anderen Truppenteil bzw. Dienſtſtelle derart abzuändern, daß die alten Angaben nur durchſtrichen werden, alſo leſerlich bleiben.

Weiterer Raum für Eintragungen auf Seite 17.

4

Extract from the *Soldbuch* (paybook) of a soldier of the division, showing the man passing through Ersatz u.Ausbildungs (replacement training and holding) units in between front line postings; the last entry is dated 20 October 1944. This man was a veteran of the original regiment, as evidenced by the numerous stamps from the replacement battalion of Regt 'General Göring'; I./Schützenbataillon, Regt 'Hermann Göring'; and the replacement regiment of Div 'Hermann Göring'. (Private collection)

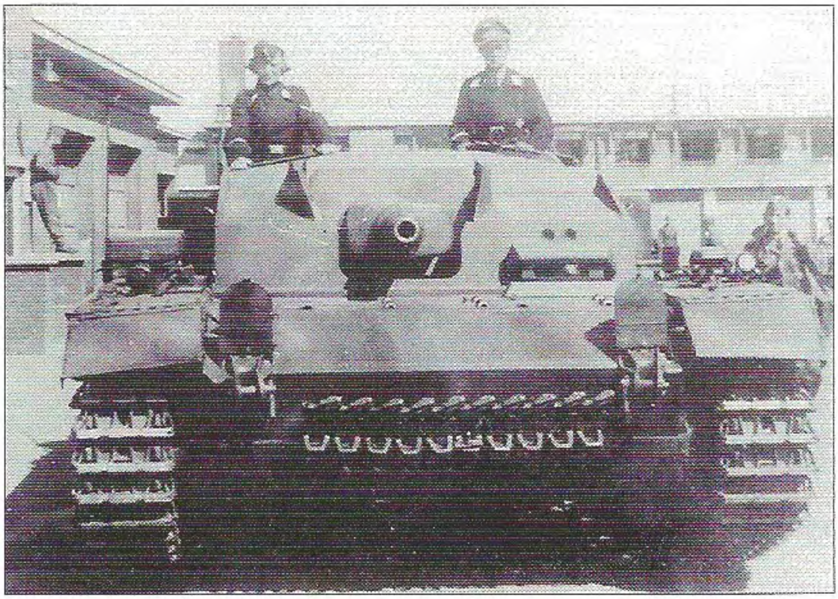
Troops of the regiment took part in many of the great pre-war military parades through Berlin. They provided guards for Reichsmarschall Göring's own headquarters, the changing of the guard often being performed with all due ceremony including the presence of the regiment's own Musikkorps. The regiment also undertook guard duties at Göring's private retreat, the sumptuous Karinhall estate (named after his deceased first wife).

Among the criteria for acceptance into the regiment were the following: age of 18–25, minimum height of 1.68m (5ft 6ins), German citizenship, eligibility for military service, fitness for active service, Aryan ancestry, unmarried status, clean police record and no charges pending, and confirmed open support for the National Socialist state. During the war years a further requirement was added: that the potential volunteer must sign on for a minimum period of 12 years' service. Such conditions were broadly analogous to those also demanded by the 'Grossdeutschland' and the 'Leibstandarte'. Clearly, however, as the war progressed the scale of combat losses would mean that such restrictive criteria could no longer be sustained in any of these élite formations. Many Luftwaffe personnel were, in effect, simply drafted into the 'Hermann Göring' Division from other units to make up combat losses.

Prior to the outbreak of war, personnel from Regiment 'General Göring' participated in the so-called *Blumenkrieg* ('Flower Wars'). The regiment took part in the annexation of Austria, where it remained for several weeks on duty in Wiener Neustadt; in the occupation of the Sudetenland and the march into Prague, after which it undertook guard duty at the strategically important Skoda vehicle works. By the eve of World War II in 1939 the regiment had grown considerably, and had the following establishment:

Regimentstab
Musikkorps
Stabsbatterie (artillery HQ battery)
I.(schwere) Flak-Abteilung (heavy AA artillery battalion)
II.(leichte) Flak-Abt (light AA battalion)
III.Scheinwerfer-Abt (searchlight battalion)
IV.(leichte) Flak-Abt
Wachbataillon (Guard, i.e. infantry battalion)
  Reiterschwadron (mounted squadron)
  9. Wachkompanie (infantry)
  10. Wachkompanie
  11. Wachkompanie
Reserve-Scheinwerfer-Abteilung
Ersatz-Abteilung (replacement training battalion)
(schwere) Eisenbahn Flak-Batterie (heavy railway AA battery)
(leichte) Flak-Batterie (light battery)

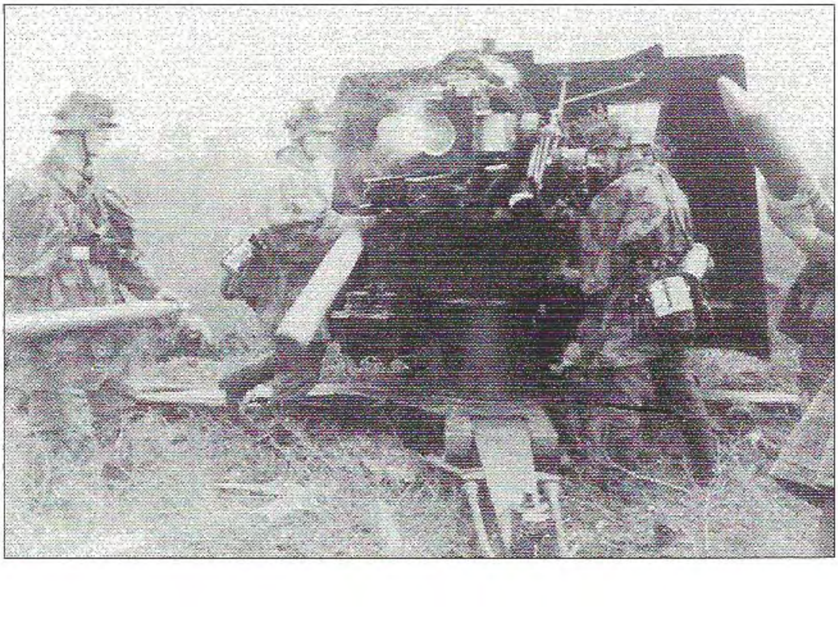
WARTIME DEVELOPMENT



An early model StuG III armoured assault gun of the 'Hermann Göring'. Note that the crew display cuffbands and the Luftwaffe-style white collar patches; from comparison of tones it is hard to tell if they are wearing the Army-style black Panzer vehicle uniform or the field-grey assault artillery equivalent. (Robert Noss)

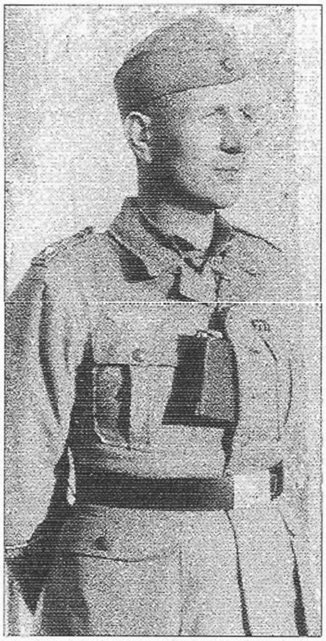
Blitzkrieg, 1940

Most of the regiment remained in Berlin during the Polish campaign of September 1939, providing anti-aircraft cover in the Reichshauptstadt and guards for Göring's headquarters. Elements of the regiment did take part in the spring 1940 campaign in the West; detached troops participated in the invasions of Denmark and Norway in April, while the bulk of the regiment waited near the Dutch border for the order to move against France and the Low Countries. The detached elements, under the command of Hauptmann Kluge, were created with a company from the Wachbataillon together with a 2cm self-propelled Flak-Batterie and a Kradschützen-Kompanie. They took part in the seizure of the airfield and radio station at Esbjerg and the securing of the coastline of Jutland. Subsequently they were transferred by sea to Oslo, where they fought alongside the Army first in the advance to Trondheim, then north up into the Arctic Circle to take the port of Bodo and relieve the pressure on the beleaguered Gebirgsjäger further north at Narvik. After successfully completing its allotted tasks, Hauptmann Kluge's detachment was transported home to Berlin.



The deadly 8.8cm guns ('eighty-eights') which equipped the heavy batteries of the Flak units proved equally effective in the anti-aircraft and ground roles during the May–June 1940 campaign in the West, where the Regiment 'General Göring' earned the praise of the Army units with which it served. This crew are wearing the *Zeltbahn* camouflage shelter-half rigged as a rain poncho, and field camouflage on their helmets. (Josef Charita)

For the May/June 1940 campaign the Regiment 'General Göring' was divided into a number of small independent Kampfgruppen, operating in close co-operation with the rapidly advancing Panzer spearheads of the Army. The achievements of its Flak units were particularly appreciated; the superb 8.8cm dual purpose guns of the heavy batteries took a deadly toll of Allied tanks, many of which had heavier armour than their German counterparts. In Holland the unit took part in the crossing of the Maas and the advance into the eastern part of Belgium. There it crossed the Albert Canal against stiff resistance and took part in the capture of Brussels, before entering France. Once on French soil it fought in Flanders, and in a remarkable action at Mormal Wood, where 'General Göring' 8.8cm guns engaged French tanks at ranges of literally only a few yards. The regiment was rewarded for its excellent performance by forming part of the honour guard of the Führer-Begleit-Kompanie for the formal armistice ceremony at Compiègne on 21 June 1940. After the successful conclusion of the Western campaign troops from the regiment provided Flak defences in bunkers along the Channel Coast as well as contributing to the anti-aircraft ring around Paris. Eventually, in late 1940, the Regiment 'General Göring' returned to Berlin.



An Oberfeldwebel from the division in tropical service dress with the tropical *Fliegermütze*; the braid-edged NCOs' version of the final pattern HERMANN GÖRING cuffband is just visible on his lower right sleeve. The 'reporting book' tucked into the tunic front identifies him as *'der Spiess'* – the first sergeant of his company. (Robert Noss)

To the East, 1941

When war erupted in the Balkans in April 1941 the regiment was despatched to Romania for intended attachment to 12. Armee; it was to be held in reserve, however, not seeing any combat although it did provide AA defences for the strategic Romanian oil fields at Ploesti.

Prior to the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 the regiment had been moved into positions along the River Bug, the dividing line between German- and Russian-occupied areas of Poland. Here it formed part of II Flak Korps, itself attached to Panzergruppe von Kleist. Fighting alongside 11. Panzer-Division, the 'General Göring' took part in the initial break-through and the advance via Radziechow, where the Flak crews once again excelled themselves in action against Soviet tanks. Then they drove onwards towards Dubno, and participated in the encirclement of Kiev and Bryansk in the Ukraine. These were hard-fought battles, and the regiment took significant casualties, but once again reinforced its growing reputation for steadfastness in combat. At the end of 1941 the regiment was removed to Germany for rest and refitting; at the same time, however, a newly formed II.Schützen-Bataillon was sent to the Eastern Front, where it was eventually all but decimated in extremely heavy fighting around Juchnow and Anissowo-Goroditsche.

Meanwhile, back in the Reich, the Flak elements moved into positions near Munich where they contributed to the city's anti-aircraft defences for a short period, before being moved once again to locations near Paris, remaining there into the spring of 1942.

'Hermann Göring' Brigade & Division: Tunisia and Sicily, 1942–43

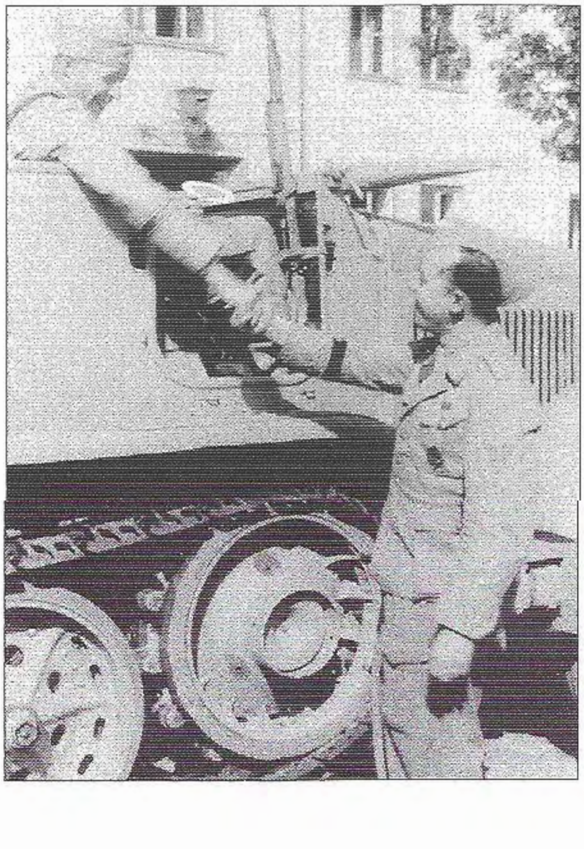
In May 1942, work began on upgrading the Regiment 'General Göring' to brigade status under the command of Generalmajor Paul Conrath, and during this period the unit served on general occupation and security duties in France. The main order of battle of the new brigade was as follows:

Stabskompanie
I.Schützen-Regt (infantry – 4 companies, numbered 1.-4.)
II.Schützen-Regt (4 companies, 5.-8., plus 9th Infantry Gun Co)
III.Schützen-Regt (3 companies: 10th Motorcycle, 11th Armoured Engineer, 13th Anti-Tank)
Flak-Regt: I.Flak-Abt (3 heavy & 3 light batteries)
    II.Flak-Abt (3 heavy, 2 light & 1 howitzer batteries)
    III.Artillerie-Abt (3 batteries)
    IV.(Führer) Abt (3 batteries, provided Flak cover at Hitler's headquarters)
Musikkorps
Wachbataillon (3 companies)
Ersatz-Abteilung

In October 1942, while the brigade was being worked up in Brittany, the decision was taken to expand the formation even further, to divisional size. The forming up of various divisional elements was carried out at numerous locations in France, Holland and back at the regimental depot in Berlin. It was at this stage that many volunteers from the Army, and up to 5,000 new volunteers from the paratroopers – including remnants of Fallschirmjäger-Regiment 5, which had been decimated during the battle for Crete – were taken on strength. The new formation was named the Division 'Hermann Göring', and was intended to be formed along the same lines as an Army Panzer division. To that end a number of experienced Army tank crews were drafted in, with an equal number of Luftwaffe personnel being detached to the Army for training with Panzer units. On paper, the main combat units were now:

Grenadier-Regt 1 & 2 'HG' (each 3 battalions plus an infantry gun company and an anti-tank company)
Jäger-Regt 'HG' (the former FJ-Regt 5 – 2 bns)
Panzer-Regt 'HG' (2 bns)
Flak-Regt 'HG' (3 bns plus Führer-Flak-Abt)
Artillerie-Regt 'HG' (4 bns plus V.Sturmgeschütz-Abt, later transferred to Pz-Regt 'HG' as III.Abt)
Aufklärungs-Abt 'HG'
Panzer-Pionier-Btl 'HG'
Panzer-Nachrichten-Abt 'HG'
plus the usual range of support and service units.

In November 1942, in retaliation for the French garrison's failure to put up sustained resistance to the Allied landings in Morocco and Algeria, Germany moved into the hitherto unoccupied areas of southern France. The bulk of the new division was located in the area around Mont-de-Marsan, where it continued its training and working up. Those sub-units nearest to being fully formed were gradually moved down into Italy while the remainder stayed in the south of France.



An Obergefreiter greets a comrade riding in an SdKfz 7 halftrack prime mover; the dark blue HERMANN GÖRING cuffband shows clearly on the right sleeve of the tan tropical tunic. The NCO in the vehicle seems to carry a traffic direction wand – see Plate H1. (Robert Noss)

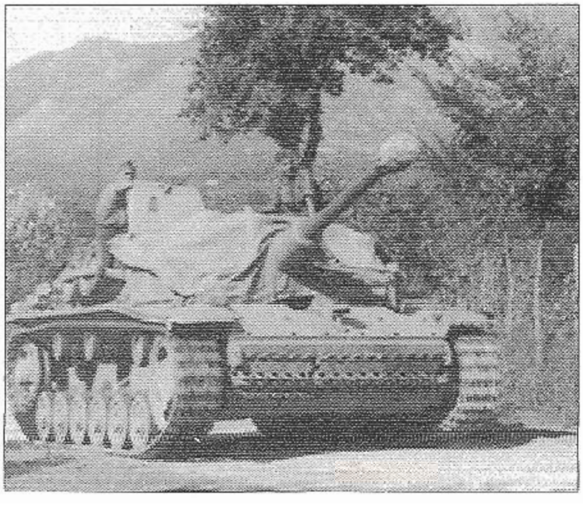
Meanwhile, in November 1942, the paratroopers who were in the process of transferring from Fallschirmjäger-Regiment 5 were moved directly to North Africa and assigned to support 10. Panzer-Division in Tunisia. The bulk of the 'HG' Division, still not fully organised, was despatched piecemeal to Tunisia in February/March 1943 under command of Oberst Schmid, who was promoted to Generalmajor shortly thereafter. It was under the title Kampfgruppe Schmid that these elements, finally totalling something between 7,000 and 11,000 men, fought the British, US and French forces, with considerable élan; they quickly earned a reputation for aggression in the attack and reliability under fire, despite often being committed to battle dispersed and attached to various Army units. It was under the title of Division 'Hermann Göring' that, in April 1943, they were commended in official Wehrmacht communiqués for their 'exemplary fighting spirit and intrepid valour'. Some 400 'Hermann Göring' soldiers were killed in the Tunisian battles; and when the German forces in North Africa were finally forced to surrender on 12 May, almost all of the remainder of the battle group, including its most experienced veterans, went into captivity.

However, Generalmajor Schmid and a few of his men had escaped to the Italian mainland, on the Reichsmarschall's express orders, before the final surrender; and these survivors joined a newly reformed division now entitled Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring'. The new division was built around those scattered elements that were still working up in France, Holland and Germany, which were now gathered in the Naples area. Efforts to mould these troops into cohesive fighting units went ahead at full speed; the Germans fully expected an Allied landing attempt on Sicily, and over the next few weeks 'Hermann Göring' troops were gradually assembled on the island until, in June 1943, the division was ready for action in its new positions around Caltagirone. The major component units of this extremely powerful new armoured division were as follows:

Divisionsstab (divisional HQ)
Panzer-Regt 'Hermann Göring' (2 tank & 1 assault gun bns)
Panzergrenadier-Regt 1 'HG' (3 bns mechanised infantry)
Panzergrenadier-Regt 2 'HG' (3 bns mechanised infantry)
Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 'HG' (armoured recce bn)
Flak-Regt 'HG' (2, later 3 bns)
Panzer-Artillerie-Regt 'HG' (3, later 4 bns plus attachments)
Panzer-Pionier-Btl 'HG' (armoured engineers)
Panzer-Nachrichten-Abt 'HG' (armoured signals)
Feldersatz-Bataillon 'HG' (replacement training)
Divisionskampfschule 'HG' (battle school company)
Nachschub-Abt 'HG' (supply bn)
Instandsetzungs-Abt 'HG' (repair workshop bn)
Verwaltungstruppe 'HG' (admin troops)
Sanitäts-Abt 'HG' (medical bn)

* * *

Operation 'Husky', the Allied invasion of Sicily, commenced on 10 July 1943. Surrounded by Italian units, most of which were of third line quality and only too happy to surrender, the 'HG'



Long-barrelled StuG III of the Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung in Sicily, 1943. Judging by its 'untactical' appearance, with a tarpaulin blinding the fighting compartment periscopes and the external machine gun unmounted, this photo was taken before the Allied landings. (Robert Noss)

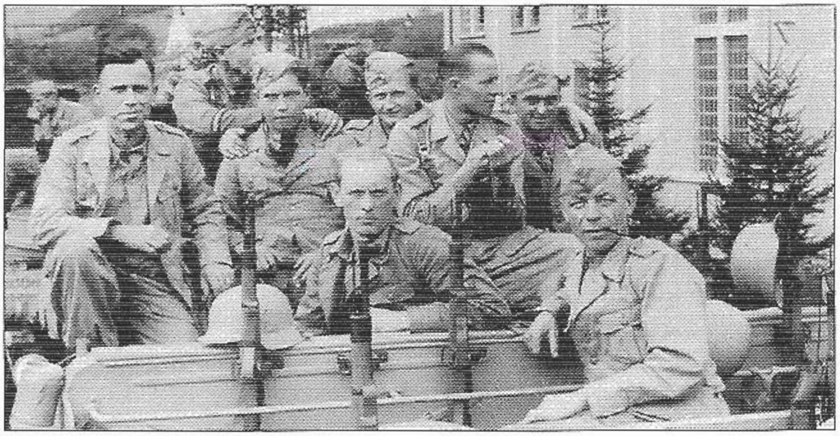
Division and the Army's 15. Panzergrenadier-Division fought well, despite coming under devastating fire from Allied naval vessels offshore; they even managed an initially successful counter-attack at Gela in the south of the island. They held their line tenaciously, but despite reinforcements – in the shape of 29. Panzergrenadier-Division flown in from mainland Italy, and elements of 1. Fallschirm-Division from France – overwhelming Allied superiority saw the Germans being pushed inexorably north-east towards Messina. The 'Hermann Göring' provided rearguard cover for other German units being evacuated to the Italian mainland, and was indeed one of the last elements to leave Sicily. Despite the heavy fighting in which it had been involved, and the intensive Allied bombing of the port of Messina through which it was withdrawn, the bulk of the 'HG' Division's personnel and most of its heavy equipment were successfully evacuated – an extraordinary achievement. It is perhaps indicative of the fighting qualities of the 'Herman Göring' that in his post-war memoirs Gen. Eisenhower maintained that the Panzer and paratroop units deployed in Sicily were amongst the best that the US forces encountered throughout the whole war. He also commented on the tenacity of the defenders, stating that each German position could only be taken once its defences had been utterly destroyed.

OPPOSITE **Hauptmann Hans Sandrock of StuG-Abt 'HG', one of the experienced Army Panzer personnel who transferred into the division in 1943. As well as the divisional cuffband on his right sleeve he wears the AFRIKA campaign cuffband on his left, earned during his service in North Africa with Panzer-Regt 5.**

Italy, 1943–44

The division was then moved to the area around Naples for an intended period of rest and refitting. Almost immediately, however, the 'Hermann Göring' was put onto the alert for further action. On 3 September the British 8th Army landed in Calabria; and on the 8th the Italian government surrendered. This came as no surprise, and Germany quickly implemented contingency plans to occupy strategic points and disarm the Italian armed forces. The following day, US 5th Army units landed at Salerno and successfully established a beachhead. German efforts to eliminate this foothold lasted for nine days; at first the 'HG' Division's efforts met with some success, but the sheer weight of firepower available to the attackers from Allied warships gradually forced the Germans to give ground. The division pulled back into Naples, where it held on tenaciously until finally relinquishing the devastated port on 1 October, withdrawing to positions on the line Volturno–Termoli.

Here once again the 'Hermann Göring' and its brothers-in-arms of 15. Panzergrenadier-Division put up a spirited defence, gaining essential time for the main defences on the Gustav Line to be prepared; this system ran right across Italy from Gaeta on the west coast to Ortona on the east, with its western end blocking the Liri Valley, the gateway to Rome. German delaying tactics were highly successful: sappers destroyed bridges, mined roads and



Divisional personnel riding in an SdKfz 7 halftrack somewhere in the Mediterranean theatre. Note that only the second from left, back row, seems to wear the cuffband; this is not unusual – many photographs show 'HG' personnel without it. The slung M1935 steel helmets are finished in sand-coloured paint. (Robert Noss)

demolished buildings while infantry, guns and armour fought stubborn rearguard actions. The Allied advance was slow and costly, and every day won by the defenders brought closer the onset of winter weather, which would compound the Allies' difficulties. With the coming of the autumn rains the bulk of the 'Hermann Göring' was then pulled back to rest in new reserve positions around Frosinone; but some elements – mainly the Flak and Panzer-Artillerie regiments – remained at the front, involved in heavy winter fighting before they too were relieved in January 1944.

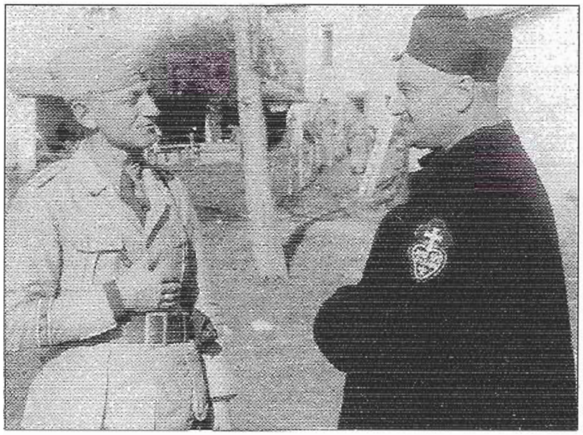
* * *

During this period the division was involved in a controversial episode. The ancient Benedictine abbey on Monte Cassino was facing the almost certain destruction of countless priceless treasures if – as seemed unavoidable, given its strategically dominating position as the western anchor of the Gustav Line – the building found itself in the centre of the combat zone. The commander of the division's Repair Workshop unit, Oberstleutnant Schlegel, approached the abbot to offer his assistance in transporting the treasures to safety in the Vatican. The sounds of battle were drawing ever nearer, and the abbot eventually accepted the offer. At first all went well, and over three weeks many truckloads made the journey to Rome safely. Then an Allied radio broadcast accused troops of the division of looting the abbey (not an unreasonable suspicion, given the Reichsmarschall's reputation as a plunderer of Europe's art treasures). But Schlegel had failed to secure permission for his humanitarian project from his divisional commander, Generalleutnant Conrath, who knew nothing of what was going on; and the lieutenant-colonel's unauthorised use of military personnel and vehicles on what was essentially civilian business could have resulted in his court martial and even execution.

A detachment of Waffen-SS field police raced to the abbey, intent on arresting the 'looters', and had to be persuaded by the monks that Schlegel was helping them, not robbing them. Fortunately for Schlegel, Gen. Conrath fully endorsed his actions, and the remaining treasures – including the sacred relics of St Benedict – were transported to safety. In grateful thanks the monks celebrated a special mass, and presented Schlegel with an illuminated scroll recognising his efforts. (Nevertheless, he was arrested by the Allies after the war on a charge of looting, and held in prison for seven months before the intervention of Field Marshal Alexander himself secured his release.)

* * *

Italy, 1943: a Hauptmann from the 'HG' Division in tropical service dress, in conversation with a member of the Catholic clergy. Under magnification it is possible to make out silver officers' piping round the flap of the captain's tropical *Fliegermütze*. (Robert Noss)



Members of the division drawn up on parade in full tropical kit for inspection by their commanding officer, himself in the blue-grey service uniform. These troops carry full rifleman's equipment including the anti-gas cape in its satchel on the chest. (Robert Noss)

As the Allies continued to push against the mountainous defences of the Gustav Line, the 'Hermann Göring' was released from the reserve and moved south to face the British 8th Army on the Garigliano river. On 22 January 1944 the Allies took the Germans completely by surprise with a landing at Anzio, north of the Gustav Line's western end, and successfully established a small bridgehead. This force was supposed to penetrate inland rapidly, drawing German troops away from Cassino and the Gustav Line; instead, not realising that the road to Rome lay virtually open before him, the US Gen. Lucas hesitated fatally. The very able German C-in-C Italy, Generalfeldmarschall Kesselring, quickly sent units racing to the Anzio front, among them elements of the 'HG' Division; the bridgehead was successfully contained, and put under such pressure that it was the Allies who had to shift men there from the Cassino sector. The 'Hermann Göring' fought effectively on the German, left flank near Cisterna, opposite the US 3rd Division and two unlucky Ranger battalions, before being withdrawn to Tuscany to reform. In February 1944 the 'Hermann Göring' was redesignated as a Fallschirm-Panzer-Division ('Parachute Armoured Division'), though this was a purely 'paper' change involving minimal alteration to its structure or capability. In April, Generalleutnant Conrath handed over command of the division to Generalmajor Wilhelm Schmalz.

In May 1944 the Allied break-out from the Anzio-Nettuno bridgehead coincided with Gen. Alexander's long-delayed capture of Monte Cassino and subsequent advance up the Liri Valley. Rome was now threatened, and so was the retreat from the Gustav Line of the German 10. Armee. Caution was thrown to the wind, and the 'Hermann Göring' was ordered to march to the Velletri sector of the front in broad daylight despite the danger from Allied air superiority. It was a decision that cost the 'HG' dearly: the German columns were attacked relentlessly by fighter-bombers, in a foretaste of what would happen to German armoured units again the following month in Normandy. Although the division initially succeeded in holding up the Allied advance it was eventually forced into retreat, pulling back at the start of June to positions on the Aniene river east of Rome; once again, however, the 'HG' Division's exemplary conduct in the face of overwhelming odds earned it a specific mention in the official Wehrmacht communiqués. By July the division had been forced back to positions south of Florence; and it was from there, on 15 July 1944, that the 'Hermann Göring' was pulled out of Italy altogether. It entrained for transfer to Russia, where a break-through by Soviet tank armies was threatening the whole central sector of the front – the massive reverse known as 'the collapse of Army Group Centre'.

'Hermann Göring' Parachute Armoured Corps: Eastern Front, 1944–45

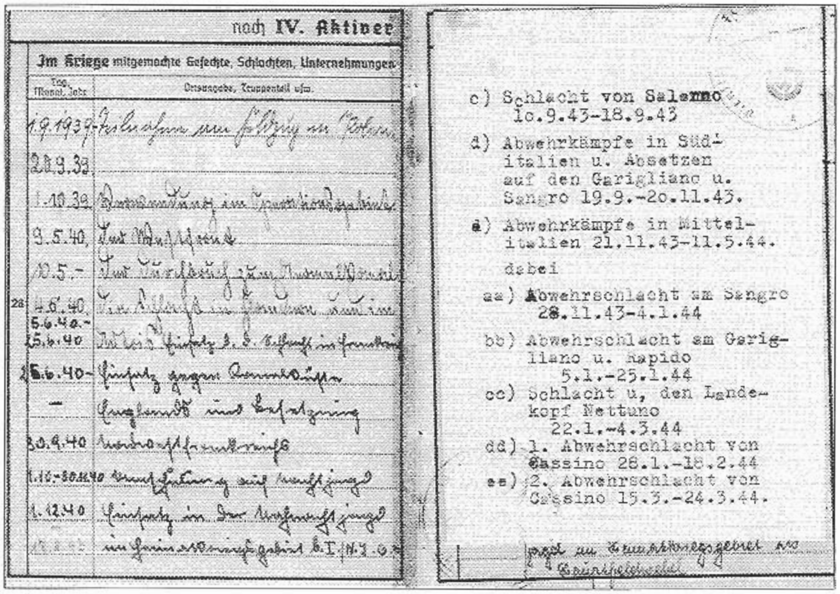
On 27 July 1944 the division reached the Eastern Front, and was sent into action north-east of Warsaw. Here the 'HG' Division, along with 5. SS-Panzer-Division 'Wiking', encircled the Soviet 3rd Tank Corps – which had broken through near Wolomin-Radcymin – and cut the enemy to pieces. This victory was an important boost for morale at a time when the German armies in the East seemed to be suffering nothing but reverses, and once again the division found itself singled out for praise: Generalfeldmarschall Model reported that it was thanks to the courageous engagement of the Fallschirm-Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring' that Warsaw could still be held. On 8 August the division was thrown into a counter-attack against a Soviet bridgehead which had been established over the Vistula between Warka and Magnuszew. The halting of the Soviet armoured forces at the gates of Warsaw also dashed any faint hopes that the Polish Home Army might have had, when they rose against the German occupiers on 1 August, that the Red Army would come to their assistance.

In the weeks that followed the 'Hermann Göring' remained in the Warsaw area, defending the Vistula line against Soviet incursions alongside troops of IV SS-Panzerkorps (the division played no part in the operations against the Warsaw Rising). It should be mentioned that even at this stage of the war, and enjoying high priority for new equipment, such a highly regarded formation as the 'Hermann Göring' still had a number of obsolete PzKw III tanks on strength, which had long since been outclassed by even the earliest models of the Soviet T-34.

On 1 October 1944 the order was given for the Fallschirm-Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring' to be expanded into a Fallschirm-Panzerkorps. This was to be achieved by raising a new sister Panzergrenadier-Division 'Hermann Göring', using intakes of fresh troops from both the Army and the Luftwaffe (with the virtual elimination of much of the air force, many unwanted specialist personnel were simply drafted as infantry). In the event the process turned out to be much more difficult than had been anticipated, as the division was involved in extremely heavy fighting during the retreat through Poland. Replacements were urgently needed to make up combat losses in the existing division, making their use for the raising of the new Panzergrenadier formation problematic.

On 5 October 1944 a massive new offensive was opened by the Soviet 3rd Byelorussian Front, which launched 19 infantry, six

Extract from the *Wehrpass* of a 'Hermann Göring' veteran, showing his participation in combat at Salerno and on the Sangro and Rapido rivers in September 1943–January 1944, his transfer to the 'Nettuno beachhead' (i.e. Anzio) in January, and his return to the Gustav Line to fight at Cassino in two separate battles in January/February and March. (Private collection)



noch IV. Aktiver

Im Kriege mitgemachte Gefechte, Schlachten, Unternehmungen

Tag, Monat, Jahr | Ortsangabe, Truppenteil usw.

c) Schlacht von Salemno
1o.9.43-18.9.43

d) Abwehrkämpfe in Süd-
italien u. Absetzen
auf den Garigliano u.
Sangro 19.9.-2o.11.43.

e) Abwehrkämpfe in Mittel-
italien 21.11.43-11.5.44.

dabei

aa) Abwehrschlacht am Sangro
28.11.43-4.1.44

bb) Abwehrschlacht am Garig-
liano u. Rapido
5.1.-25.1.44

cc) Schlacht u, den Lande-
kopf Nettuno
22.1.-4.3.44

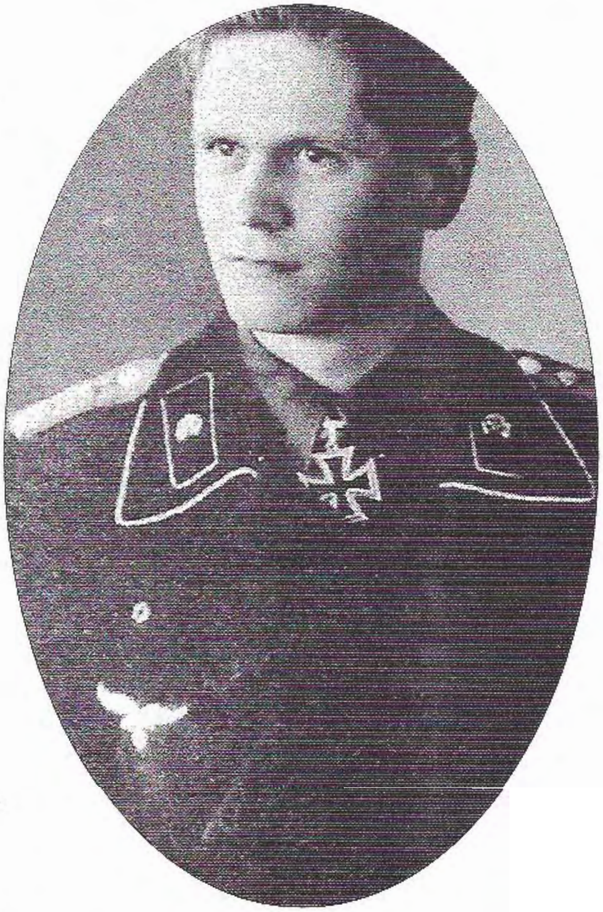
dd) 1. Abwehrschlacht von
Cassino 28.1.-18.2.44

ee) 2. Abwehrschlacht von
Cassino 15.3.-24.3.44.

tank and two artillery divisions against the weakened Germans. Just days later the 'Hermann Göring' was pulled out of the front line, but only to be rushed north to help defend East Prussia as the Red Army approached the Baltic port of Memel. In mid-October the Soviets began a push on Königsberg, and to counter this threat 'Hermann Göring' corps units were thrown into the fray alongside 5. Panzer-Division and the Führer-Begleit-Brigade. Despite their piecemeal deployment the rapidly assembled German force smashed into the Soviet 11th Guards Army and forced them into retreat. In 14 days of furious fighting the 'Hermann Göring' units, now defending German soil, held off everything the enemy could throw at them. With the Russian offensive in the area blunted the fighting deteriorated into static trench warfare.

It was to be January 1945 before both divisions of the 'HG' Corps were considered ready for commitment. Command of the corps remained with Generalmajor Schmalz, who was promoted Generalleutnant on 30 January 1945. The principal order of battle of the new corps was planned as follows, although this establishment was never fully achieved:

Hauptmann Gerhard Tschierschwitz, awarded the Knight's Cross on 10 December 1944 when serving as commander of 2.Kompanie/ Fallschirm-Pz-Regt 'HG' on the Eastern Front. It is interesting that at this late date he still wears on his black Panzer uniform the black, white-edged death's-head collar patches, and silver or white collar piping.



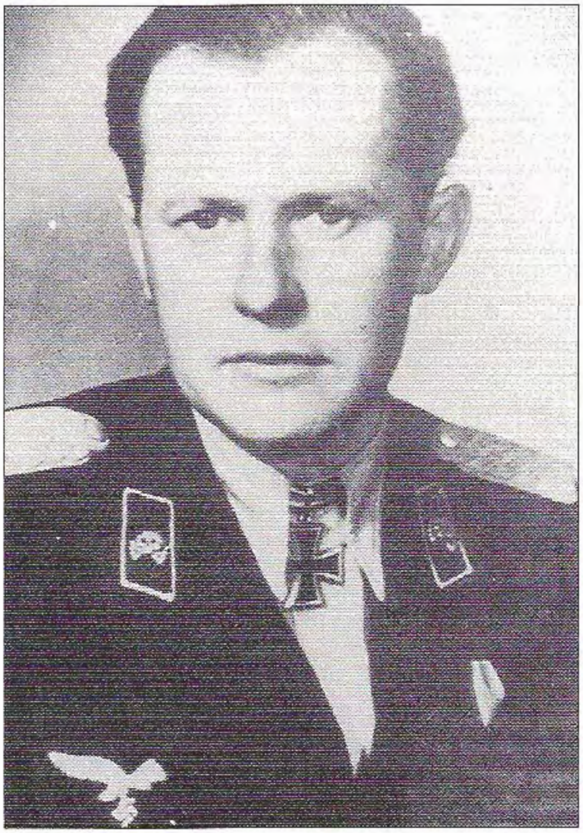
Generalkommando
Korpstruppen:
    Fallschirm-Panzer-Sturm-Btl 'HG' (mech inf bn)
    Fallschirm-Panzerkorps-Pionier-Btl 'HG'
    Fallschirm-Panzerkorps-Nachrichten-Abt 'HG'
    Fallschirm-Flak-Regt 'HG'
    Nachschub-Abt 'HG'
    Instandsetzung-Abt 'HG'
    Verwaltungs-Btl 'HG'
    Sanitäts-Abt 'HG'

Fallschirm-Panzer-Division 1 'Hermann Göring':
    Divisionsstab
    Fallschirm-Panzer-Regt 'HG' (2 bns)
    Fallschirm-Panzergrenadier-Regt 1 'HG' (2 bns)
    Fallschirm-Panzergrenadier-Regt 2 'HG' (2 bns)
    Fallschirm-Panzer-Artillerie-Regt 1 'HG' (3 bns)
    Fallschirm-Panzerfusilier-Btl 1 'HG' (light inf)
    Fallschirm-Panzer-Pionier-Btl 1 'HG'
    Fallschirm-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abt 1 'HG'
    Fallschirm-Panzer-Nachrichten-Abt 1 'HG'
    Feldersatz-Btl 1 'HG'
    Sanitäts-Abt 1 'HG'

Fallschirm-Panzergrenadier-Division 2 'Hermann Göring':
    Divisionsstab
    Fallschirm-Panzergrenadier-Regt 3 'HG' (3 bns)
    Fallschirm-Panzergrenadier-Regt 4 'HG' (3 bns)
    Fallschirm-Panzer-Artillerie-Regt 2 'HG' (3 bns)
    Fallschirm-Sturmgeschütz-Abt 'HG' (5 cos)
    Fallschirm-Panzerfusilier-Btl 2 'HG'
    Fallschirm-Panzerpionier-Btl 2 'HG'
    Fallschirm-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abt 2 'HG'

Fallschirm-Panzer-Nachrichten-Abt 2 'HG'
Feldersatz-Abt 2 'HG'
Sanitäts-Abt 2 'HG'

Fallschirm-Panzer–Ersatz u. Ausbildungsbrigade 'HG'
Fallschirm-Panzer–Ersatz u. Ausbildungsbrigade 2 'HG'
Führer-Flak-Abteilung
Begleit-Bataillon 'Reichsmarschall Göring'
Ersatz u. Ausbildungsregiment 'HG'
Heimatstab Berlin



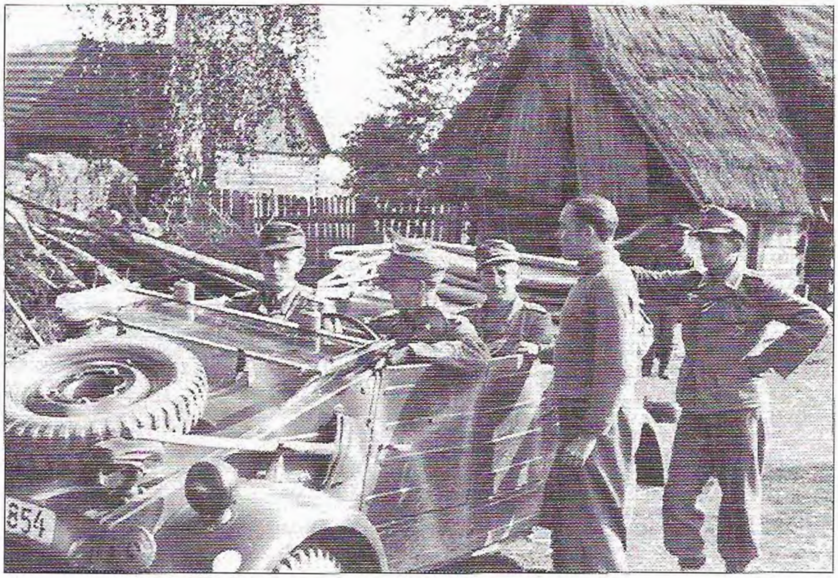
Major Constantin Hahm, battalion commander of II./Fallschirm-Pz-Regt 'HG', wears the same collar patches on an unpiped collar but left and right patches seem to be reversed in comparison with the photo of Captain Tschierschwitz. The white or pale blue Luftwaffe shirt is probably worn for walking-out dress. Hahm was decorated with the Knight's Cross on 9 June 1944. (Josef Charita)

Before the corps could be sent into action as a cohesive formation, however, the Fallschirm-Panzer-Division and the Flak-Regiment from the corps level troops were withdrawn and sent to the area around the River Russ, near Memel, where a Soviet break-through seemed imminent. Here, once again, the spirited fighting of the division succeeded in holding back the enemy and almost certainly averted a catastrophic collapse. Fighting alongside other elements of 4. Armee, the 'Hermann Göring' tank and assault gun crews took punishing losses but also inflicted a severe mauling on the Red Army. One particular Panther tank commander, Feldwebel Bowitz of the Panzer-Regiment's 4. Kompanie, knocked out 13 enemy tanks within a few hours of combat; he was decorated with the Knight's Cross on 14 January 1945. The regiment's 1. Kompanie also scored significant successes, knocking out 47 enemy tanks and 30 anti-tank guns over six days of heavy fighting.

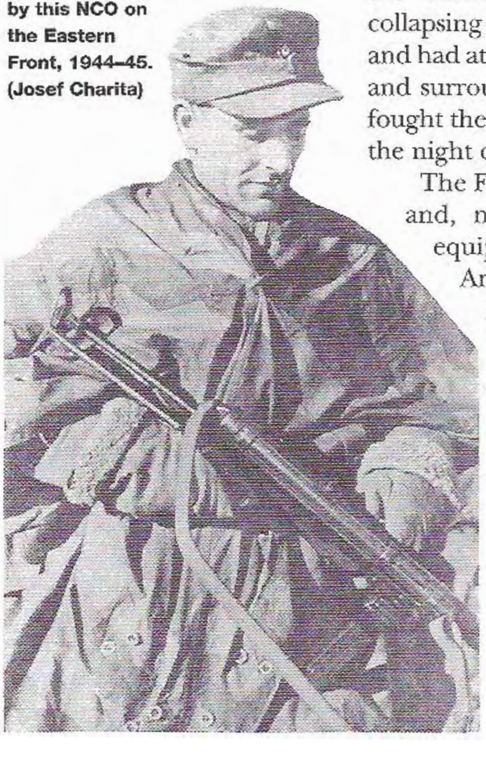
Once the fighting in this sector had died down somewhat the Fallschirm-Panzer-Division 'HG' was moved to the area around Gumbinnen, where efforts were made to complete the formation of the new corps. This was now operating with Panzergrenadier-Division 'Grossdeutschland', two infantry and two Volksgrenadier divisions. Both the German units and the Soviet troops opposing them were exhausted, and for a while the fighting was limited to relatively static warfare. The Germans were well aware, however, that a fresh enemy offensive was inevitable. Meanwhile, the Fallschirm-Panzer-Division and the first battalion of the Flak-Regiment were once again detached from the corps and, with some support elements, were ordered to Radom in Poland.

On 12 January a fresh Soviet onslaught fell upon the entire Eastern Front and the remaining elements of the corps were pushed inexorably back into East Prussia by massed Red Army tank forces. Within just ten days the enemy had cut off the whole of East Prussia from the rest of Germany, and the German 2., 3. and 4. Armee were encircled. Although the trapped 'Hermann Göring' units were still inflicting punishing losses on the enemy and earning glowing praise, they too suffered heavy casualties, and many elements of the 'HG' corps were almost completely wiped out. On 25 March 1945 surviving units were evacuated from Balga and Kahlholz across the Frisches Haff to Pillau; from there they were

Members of the divisional military police troop on the Eastern Front, 1944; the driver can be seen to wear the Army pattern *Feldgendarmerie* cuffband on the left sleeve, but note that the conspicuous white collar patches have been removed. The right-hand man clearly wears a lightweight summer tunic with standard wool trousers – see Plate H1.



Only selected elements from the regiment and division were issued with Waffen-SS camouflage smocks; the remainder used available items in Wehrmacht 'splinter' camouflage material, such as the *Zeltbahn* worn by this NCO on the Eastern Front, 1944–45. (Josef Charita)



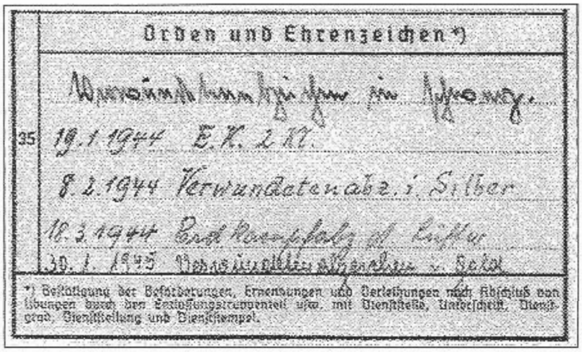
evacuated by sea, the majority to Swinemünde but some to Denmark. It is estimated that some 75 per cent of the corps' strength at the beginning of the Soviet offensive had been lost in just ten weeks of bitter fighting.

The evacuated troops were reassembled near Berlin before being moved eastwards once again, to the area around Königsbrück, where they met up once again with the Fallschirm-Panzer-Division 'HG'. The tank division had been unable to reach its designated operational area at Radom, which had already fallen to the Soviets, and had therefore remained attached to the German Army's premier formation, the 'Grossdeutschland' (it is a measure of the utter confusion on the collapsing Eastern Front that some 'GD' units had also become separated and had attached themselves to the Fallschirm-Panzerkorps 'HG'). Cut off and surrounded, the 'Grossdeutschland' and 'Hermann Göring' troops fought their way westwards to the Oder, which was successfully crossed on the night of 31 January 1945 on a bridge erected by the 'GD' pioneers.

The Fallschirm-Panzer-Division fought its way through Upper Silesia and, near Koderdorf, the first battalion of the tank regiment, equipped with the excellent PzKw V Panther, engaged 1st Polish Armoured Division – a Soviet-raised formation fighting with the Red Army. In a brief but furious battle the 'Hermann Göring' Panthers destroyed 43 enemy tanks and captured 12 more in the space of just 20 minutes. The captured T-34s were quickly taken over by German crews, hastily marked with German recognition symbols, and sent back into action against their former owners.

By late April 1945 the Fallschirm-Panzer-Division was in action around Bautzen in one of the last successful battles in the East, when the Soviets were driven out and the city recaptured, even if only briefly. By now reunited, the 'HG' Corps repelled a Soviet armoured assault near Königsbrück; and when the final surrender was announced, the corps was still in action against the Red Army near Dresden. Knowing what would await them in Soviet captivity, the troops were ordered to make their way as rapidly as possible westwards to surrender to the US Army; but they were cut off by Soviet armoured units. The vast majority of surviving personnel from Fallschirm-Panzerkorps 'Hermann Göring' passed into Soviet imprisonment from which many never emerged. It was not until 1956 that those who had survived captivity were finally released.

One significant element of the Panzerkorps was missing when the end came: II. Abteilung of the Panzer-Regiment 'HG', which was still at the Army training grounds at Gräfenwohr for conversion onto the Panther tank. In the final stages of the war it was absorbed into a rapidly formed Panzergruppe consisting of disparate elements which were still undergoing training at Gräfenwohr, and sent directly to the Eastern Front, where it was wiped out around Allersborg and Greding.



Orden und Ehrenzeichen*)

Verwundetenabzeichen in Schwarz.

35 19.1.1944 E.K. 2 Kl.

8.2.1944 Verwundetenabz. i. Silber

18.3.1944 Erd Kampfabz. d. Luftw.

30.1.1945 Verwundetenabzeichen i. Gold

*) Beſtätigung der Beförderungen, Ernennungen und Verleihungen nach Abſchluß von Übungen durch den Entlaſſungstruppenteil uſw. mit Dienſtſtelle, Unterſchrift, Dienſtgrad, Dienſtſtellung und Dienſtſtempel.

Award entries in the *Wehrpass* of an NCO from the division; (top to bottom) Wound Badge in Black; Iron Cross 2nd Class, 19.1.44; Wound Badge in Silver, 8.2.44; Ground Combat Badge, 18.3.44; and finally the Wound Badge in Gold – for his fifth wound – on 30.1.45. (Private collection)

Satellite units

The fate of the various 'HG' satellite units, and in particular the replacement and training battalions, is not without interest:

Ersatz u. Ausbildungs-Abteilung, -Regiment & -Brigade The main replacement and training depot of the 'HG' formations was moved to Utrecht in Holland on the successful conclusion of the campaign in the West. As the regiment expanded into first a brigade and then a division, the Ersatz unit grew apace, and additional depots were opened at Amersfort and Hilversum. A number of 'HG' troops from these training depots saw action during the Allied airborne offensive, Operation 'Market Garden', in September 1944.

On the enlargement of the division to corps status, the Fallschirm-Ersatz u. Ausbildungs-Regts 1 & 2 were transferred to Rippin in West Prussia to constitute the cadre around which a new Ersatz u.Ausbildungs-Brigade 'HG' would be built. Despite this substantial transfer of manpower the replacement units in Holland continued to grow, aided by an influx of personnel from numerous Luftwaffe ground staff units which had been disbanded. The 'HG' personnel in Holland, even at this late date, numbered in excess of 12,000 men, including a Grenadier-Bataillon, a Pionier-Bataillon, a Flak-Abteilung, a Panzer-Abteilung and an Artillerie-Abteilung. As the Western Front began to crumble, these units, formed into a Sturm-Regiment zbV ('Assault Regiment for Special Duties'), fought their way eastwards, retreating into Germany itself. These elements finally surrendered to US forces near Bonn.

Meanwhile, on the Eastern Front, the Ersatz u. Ausbildungs-Brigade 'HG' gradually pulled back to Graudenz, and formed part of the garrison defending this city, which had been declared a 'fortress'. Although powerful in terms of numbers, the unit was formed largely from inexperienced recruits or conscripts, the voluntary nature of the 'Hermann Göring' having been abandoned long since. Fortunately, despite Hitler's orders that such fortresses be defended to the last man and last bullet, the brigade commander ordered that the most recent and least trained recruits be sent home; these lucky few escaped the Soviet captivity which awaited their comrades when Graudenz finally surrendered on 7 March 1945.

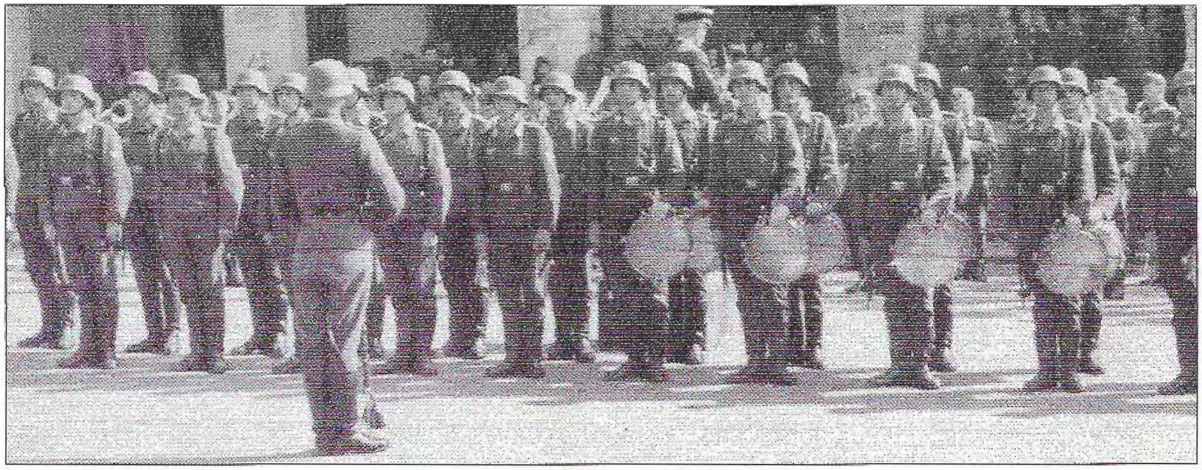
With the E u.A Regt in the West and the E u.A Bde in the East now both gone, the few remnants were scraped together into a purely nominal 'brigade' which was sent to the Oder front. It went into battle around Eberswalde, and inevitably took severe punishment before ending the war near Mecklenburg.

Wachregiment/ Begleit-Regiment The original Guard Regiment was dissolved in April 1944 and replaced by a new unit, the Begleit-Regiment 'Hermann Göring', consisting of a Panzergrenadier-Bataillon, a Flak-Abteilung, and the Eisenbahn-Flak-Begleit-Batterie – the latter consisting of railway wagons mounting anti-aircraft weapons. In July 1944 the regiment was sent to East Prussia where it was engaged in combat against the Red Army until September. Withdrawn from the front, the regiment was dissolved once again and many of its personnel were assigned to Fallschirm-Panzergrenadier-Regt 1 and the Fallschirm-Flak-Regiment. A new but very short-lived escort unit, the Begleit-Bataillon 'Reichsmarschall Göring', was itself disbanded in March 1945.

Wachbataillon, Regiment 'General Göring' A special guard detachment from the Wachbataillon of the Regiment 'General Göring' was assigned to duties at the Reichsmarschall's estate at Karinhall, some 50km north of Berlin. Given the number of high-ranking dignitaries who visited, this was an important, high security task. It was also a popular duty, as it gave the soldiers the chance to see many famous personalities close up, and the Görings themselves took a kindly interest in the soldiers from their 'personal' regiment. Over time, the original platoon-sized detachment grew to company strength. The unit remained on duty until the bitter end (which was more than the Reichsmarschall did); when the Red Army were literally on Göring's doorstep, demolition charges levelled the entire complex. The last guards departed on 20 April 1945.

Musikkorps One element of the 'HG' units deserving special mention was the Musikkorps; this prestigious military band was another feature which the Luftwaffe's premier formation had in common with the 'Grossdeutschland' and the 'Leibstandarte-SS'. In fact the Musikkorps

OPPOSITE **Luftwaffe Salver of Honour awarded to Oberleutnant Hans Jenosch of the 'Hermann Göring' Division. This *Ehrenschale*, of which original examples are of the highest rarity, was instituted on 15 June 1942 for acts of gallantry superior to those which could be recognised by the Iron Cross 1st Class but not so great as to justify the award of the German Cross in Gold. It was specifically intended for non-flying personnel, a prerequisite being that the recipient already held both classes of the Iron Cross and also the Ground Combat Badge. The salver was made in a silver alloy known as Alpaka, exclusively by the Berlin jewellers Johannes Wagner & Sohn; it was 11ins (28cm) in diameter, with a decorative border of alternating oak and laurel leaves. In the recessed centre was the large eagle, swastika and crossed batons emblem of Reichsmarschall Göring, above a scroll inscribed *IN ANERKENNUNG HERVORRAGENDER KAMPFLEISTUNGEN* ('In Recognition of Outstanding Combat Achievement'). Above the eagle a large scroll was engraved with the name of the recipient, above a smaller one with the date of the award. On the introduction of the Luftwaffe's Honour Roll Clasp in August 1944 existing holders of the *Ehrenschale* automatically qualified for the new clasp. (Jamie Cross)**



of the Regiment 'General Göring' was larger than either its Army or SS equivalent. It was raised around a cadre of Army musicians drafted into the Luftwaffe in 1935 and under the command of Stabsmusikmeister Paul Hase, who also taught music at the University of Berlin. The Musikkorps soon developed a reputation second to none for the quality of its performances, and was extremely innovative, introducing instruments such as the saxophone which at that time were unheard of in military bands. The Musikkorps even visited the troops at the front, providing a much-appreciated boost to morale with concerts in the field. Eventually, however, as military reverses mounted, the need for bandsmen was overtaken by the need for front line manpower. The Musikkorps was dissolved and its personnel absorbed into the Feldgendarmerie element of the 'Hermann Göring' Division.

Corps administrative staff Those soldiers belonging to the administrative staff of the Fallschirm-Panzerkorps 'HG' who were still at the home depot in Berlin were thrown into the final defensive battles for the capital in May 1945, and were totally annihilated.

* * *

Though Hermann Göring showed himself to be unworthy of the loyalty of the men he commanded, both in the air and on the battlefield, there is no doubt that the units which bore his name became one of most impressive military formations to emerge during the period of the Third Reich. Their aggression in the attack and steadfastness in defence earned the men who wore its white collar patches the respect of their enemies in Tunisia, Sicily, Italy and on the Russian Front. Their obese marshal might embellish his flamboyant personal uniforms with decorations which he did not deserve; but a total of 62 members of the units wearing his cufftitle earned the coveted Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for combat gallantry. Of these, six soldiers were decorated with the Oakleaves, and one with the Oakleaves with Swords.

UNIFORMS

Police uniform

As initially formed, the 'Göring' unit naturally wore standard Landespolizei uniform. For the first few months of the unit's existence this was the old dark blue Prussian police uniform, but in July 1933 they were the first to receive the new green uniform with dark brown collar facing and 'Police green' piping. A special cuffband was introduced in December 1933 for wear on the left forearm, of dark green cloth with Russia braid edging and the inscription *L.P.G. General Göring*. The lettering was embroidered in silver-grey thread Gothic

OPPOSITE **The Musikkorps of Regt 'General Göring'- see Plate C3. The great majority of these musicians eventually saw service with the divisional Feldgendarmerie troop.**

script for enlisted men, had silver-grey braid edging for NCOs, and 'silver' (aluminium) wire hand-embroidered lettering and braid edging for officers.

One interesting piece of insignia worn at this time by the 1st Company (known at that time as 1. Hundertschaft, the company strength being 100 men) was the so-called 'Southern Cross' (see Plate A1). This consisted of a white cloth left sleeve shield edged in black and with a black cross quartering the white field; the upper left quarter was red and bore five white stars arranged in the pattern of the constellation. This was a tradition emblem commemorating those Police personnel who had served in German East Africa. When the Regiment 'General Göring' transferred to the Luftwaffe the honour of wearing this tradition badge was relinquished to another Police unit.

At the time the Regiment 'General Göring' was transferred into the Luftwaffe a transitional uniform was worn, featuring basic Police tunic, trousers and cap, but with the addition of a Luftwaffe-style cloth national eagle badge on the right breast, and Luftwaffe insignia on the peaked service cap. The *L.P.G. General Göring* cuffband was also carried over onto this transitional uniform.

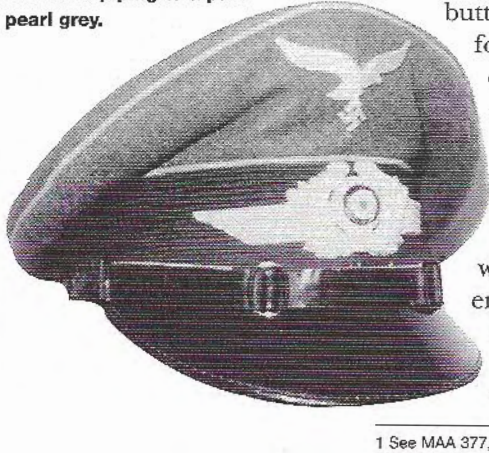
Luftwaffe uniforms

The basic uniform of the 'General/Hermann Göring' units was the blue-grey service dress of the Luftwaffe – trousers or breeches worn with either the four-pocket Rock (tunic), the popular Fliegerbluse (flyer's blouse), or the dual-purpose Waffenrock; and with either the service dress peaked cap, the Fliegermütze sidecap or, from 1943, the peaked Einheitsfeldmütze field cap.[1]

Headgear

The service dress headgear was the peaked (visored) cap (**Schirmmütze** or **Dienstmütze**) of the standard pattern worn by all Luftwaffe branches. For officers this had a blue-grey wool crown and a black woven mohair band; the glossy black peak was usually made from a material known as Vulkanfiber, with leather edge binding; and officers wore double plaited aluminium wire chincords attached by pebbled aluminium buttons. Enlisted men and NCOs wore essentially the same cap though of inferior materials, with a black leather chinstrap attached by black metal buttons. Standard Luftwaffe insignia were in stamped white metal for enlisted ranks and embroidered aluminium wire for officers: the national emblem on the crown, above the national cockade surrounded by a wreath and supported by stylised wings on the band. For the 'General/Hermann Göring' units the enlisted ranks' pattern featured white Waffenfarbe piping to the crown seam and both edges of the band, while officers' caps bore the universal aluminium wire piping, or gold-coloured for generals. Both officer and enlisted patterns of the service cap could be worn with a white summer crown between April and September.

After the service cap the most popular form of headwear was the undress **Fliegermütze**, a blue-grey sidecap with a



Peaked service cap for enlisted men (pre-war) and NCOs, with white piping to the crown and band, pressed metal insignia, and a patent leather chinstrap. These caps are often faked, so collectors should note that after 50 years most original pieces – though not necessarily all – will show a discoloration in the white piping to a pale pearl grey.

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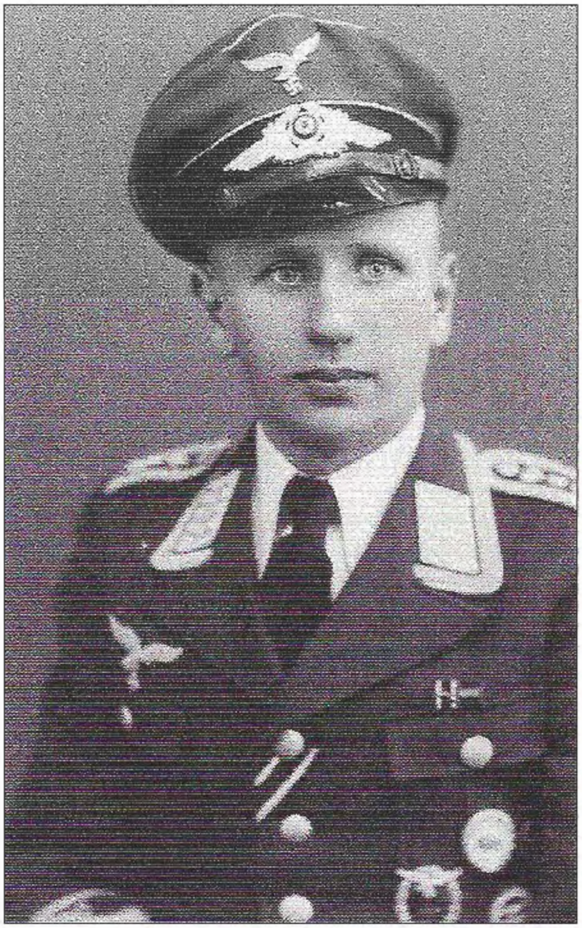
[1] See MAA 377, *Luftwaffe Air and Ground Crews 1939-45* for general data on Luftwaffe uniforms, and charts of rank insignia.

turn-up 'curtain' or 'turban'. Normally the upper edge of the turn-up was piped in aluminium braid for officers and was unpiped for lower ranks; there are, however, recorded examples of a Fliegermütze with white piping worn by personnel of 'General/Hermann Göring' units – though it can be assumed that these strictly non-regulation types saw only limited use. The national emblem was worn on the front of the crown, in white or silver thread depending upon rank, above the national cockade on the turban – for officers this padded boss was outlined in silver thread.

In 1943 the issue of the **Einheitsfeldmütze** 'universal field cap' began in most of the German armed services, intended to replace all the other forms of field cap then in use not only by military but also by civil, political and police organisations. Based on the ski or mountain style cap, this had a long cloth peak and a turn-up 'curtain' flap, its ends fastening at the front above the peak by two buttons – this could be lowered and fastened over the chin in cold weather. The Luftwaffe version was in the usual blue-grey wool; officers' caps had aluminium braid piping to the crown seam. Enlisted ranks' caps were normally unpiped but, once again, a few examples are known with white piping to the crown for 'Hermann Göring' units. National insignia were at first as on the Fliegermütze, but the cockade tended to be hidden by the front flap and a smaller one-piece insignia was later produced on a trapezoid cloth backing.



Stabsfeldwebel Heinz Gross, from Panzergrenadier-Regt 1 'HG'. He wears the four-pocket service tunic with NCO *Tresse* braid to the collar and white piping to its outer edge. The first pattern *General Göring* cuffband can just be seen on his right forearm; below it (and obscured by the edge of this print) are the double aluminium braid stripes indicating his status as Hauptfeldwebel – company first sergeant. Note that he wears the Luftwaffe Ground Combat Badge on the left breast pocket. Gross began his service in aircrew and, after serving in the 'HG' Division, he returned to flying duties with a night fighter squadron. Incidentally, although he wears no clasp here, his paybook specifically lists the award of the Close Combat Clasp *of the Luftwaffe* – see caption, page 47. (Private collection)

Service dress

The four-pocket M1935 **Rock** was a single-breasted tunic with four pebble-finish aluminium front buttons, an open collar, turn-back cuffs, and four pleated patch pockets with straight, buttoned flaps – the officer's private purchase version, of better materials and cut, might have slightly scalloped flaps. All ranks wore the Luftwaffe's 'flying eagle' version of the national emblem on the right breast, in white or aluminium thread according to rank. Non-commissioned ranks from Unteroffizier upwards wore 1cm flat aluminium braid (Tresse) edging the collar; in January 1944 this metallic braid was ordered replaced by dull grey artificial silk.

A lightweight white linen version was available for wear by officers during the summer months (April to September); this tunic had all insignia removable to facilitate cleaning, the national emblem being a pin-back white metal version. No such tunic was provided for NCOs and enlisted men, but for walking-out dress these ranks sometimes wore white trousers with the blue-grey tunic - see Plate C3.

The M1935 **Fliegerbluse** was a hip-length, close-fitting, single-breasted jacket with a concealed fly front; although it was capable of being closed at the neck by a hook-&-eye the collar was normally worn pressed open, particularly by officers, who would typically wear a shirt and tie under this garment. There were no external pockets; the enlisted ranks' blouse had adjustable cuff fastenings and, like the tunic, had provision for metal belt-support hooks. Although collar Tresse was displayed by NCOs, this first pattern enlisted mens' blouse bore no national emblem, since it was categorised as working clothing; the eagle was, however, worn by officers. From May 1940 internal skirt pockets were authorised, for officers with curved 'slashes' for access and for enlisted ranks with external buttoned flaps. From October 1940 the national emblem was added to the right breast for all ranks.

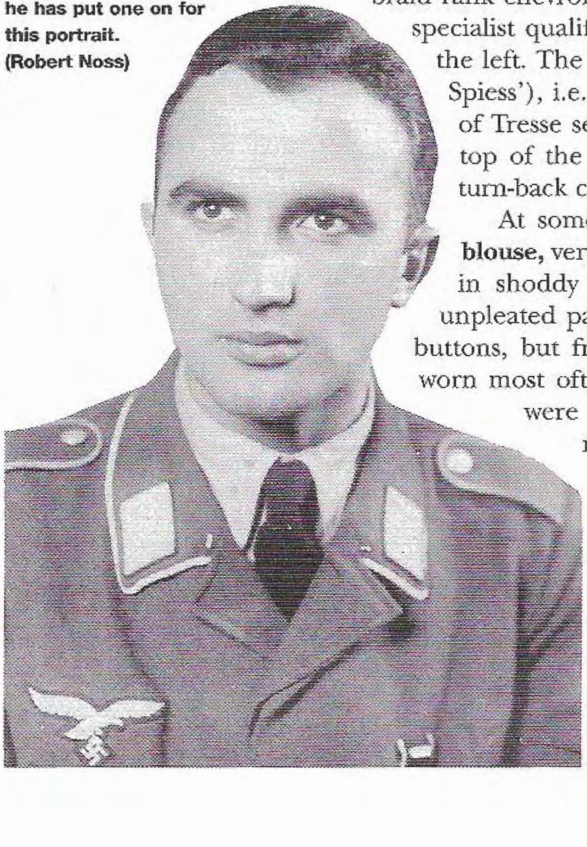
The **Waffenrock** tunic was introduced in late 1938 and was intended ultimately to replace both the Rock and the Fliegerbluse. It was essentially similar to the four-pocket tunic, having the same cuffs and pockets; however, it had five front buttons and was intended to be worn with the collar closed at the neck (though it was capable of being worn open). While seen in some photographs of officers, the M1938 Waffenrock was never as popular as the M1935 tunic or, particularly, the Fliegerbluse.

As first manufactured or authorised, all three of these pre-war garments had the collars piped – in branch-of-service colour (Waffenfarbe) for all enlisted ranks, with silver cord for officers and with gold cord for general officers; the basic distinguishing colour for 'General/Hermann Göring' personnel was white. The troops' and NCOs' coloured piping was ordered discontinued from March 1940; nevertheless, piped tunics and blouses continued to be worn late into the war.

Rank and branch of service were indicated on collar patches and shoulder straps – see 'Insignia & Waffenfarben' below. Senior privates (junior NCOs, in British and US terms) also wore one to three silver-grey braid rank chevrons on the upper left sleeve, and enlisted ranks wore specialist qualification or 'trade' badges on the forearms – usually the left. The appointment – not rank – of Hauptfeldwebel ('Der Spiess'), i.e. a company's senior NCO, was marked by two rings of Tresse set 50mm apart on the tunic sleeve 50mm above the top of the cuff or in equivalent position on tunics without a turn-back cuff.

At some time in 1944, issue began of a four-pocket **field blouse,** very similar to the M1943 field blouse used by the Army, in shoddy 'field grey' wool of a rather brownish hue. The unpleated patch pockets had straight flaps; there were six front buttons, but from photographic evidence it seems to have been worn most often with the top button undone. No collar patches were worn with this blouse. The national emblem was machine-embroidered on field grey backing, and it is believed that the shoulder straps used were the standard blue-grey wool type. This blouse was worn with matching trousers and M1943 field cap.

The grey-blue wool double-breasted **greatcoat** had two rows of six buttons; it could be closed at the neck but – in contrast to the Army equivalent – was usually worn open with the first three buttons left undone. It had two slanted hip pockets with buttoned flaps, and a buttoned integral rear half-belt for adjustment. Again unlike the Army, in



An enlisted man from the division wearing the popular *Fliegerbluse* in its pre-March 1940 version, with white collar piping. The medal ribbon just visible on his left breast commemorates the occupation of the Sudetenland, with clasp for the seizure of Prague, indicating that he is a veteran from the pre-war Regt 'General Göring'. Shirt collar and tie were not usually worn with service dress by enlisted men, but he has put one on for this portrait. (Robert Noss)

addition to the uniform shoulder straps attached to the coat, the Luftwaffe collar patches were worn on the greatcoat by all ranks; NCOs wore short L-sections of their distinctive Tresse braid, 25mm wide, along the front and outside edges of the patches. (From September 1942 the same display was authorised, under some circumstances, for the collar patches of NCOs' Fliegerblusen in place of full collar Tresse.)

Insignia & Waffenfarben

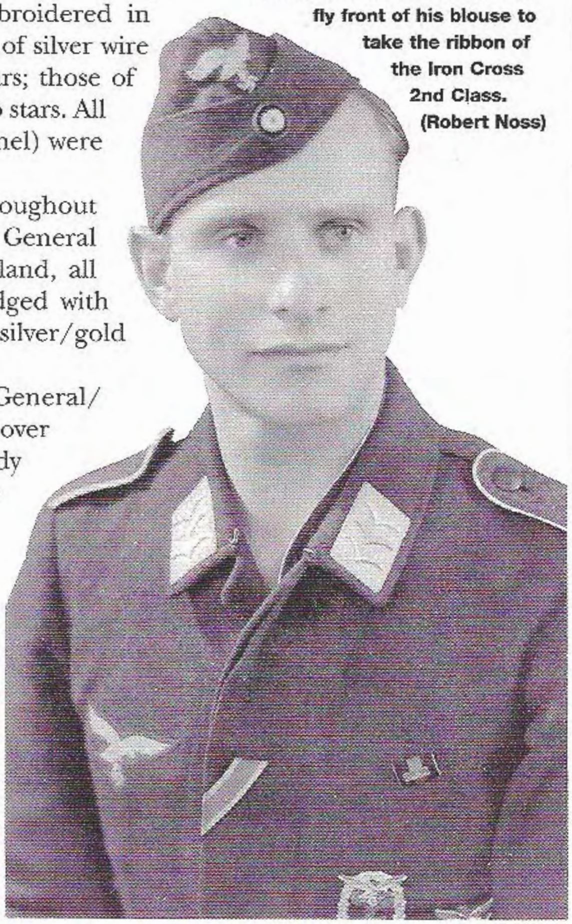
The standard Luftwaffe system of distinguishing rank and branch of service was by collar patches and shoulder straps. Briefly, rhomboid-shaped patches in the appropriate Waffenfarbe were worn on both sides of the collar in mirrored pairs. For enlisted ranks these were not normally piped round the edges, but in this the 'General/Hermann Göring' units were an exception. The junior enlisted ranks were identified by from one to four silver-grey alloy stylised double wings – Doppelschwingen – pinned to the patch, and NCOs by from one to four wings differenced by their additional collar Tresse. Junior ranks' shoulder straps were in blue-grey edged with Waffenfarbe piping; NCOs' straps also had aluminium braid Tresse around the inner edges, and one to three silver-grey alloy stars.

Officers' collar patches were piped round the edges with aluminium cord; rank was indicated by from one to three stylised double wings above an oakleaf spray for subalterns, and from one to three wings within an oakleaf garland for field officers, all embroidered in aluminium wire. Junior officers' shoulder boards were of silver wire in a lengthways corded effect, with one or two gilt stars; those of field officers, of interwoven tripled cord with one or two stars. All officers' shoulderboards up to the rank of Oberst (colonel) were set on an 'underlay' of appropriate Waffenfarbe.

General officers' distinguishing colour was white throughout the Luftwaffe; Generalmajor, Generalleutnant and General wore from one to three wings within an oakleaf garland, all embroidered in gold wire on white collar patches edged with gold cord; and interwoven shoulder boards of gold/silver/gold cords on white underlay with appropriate gilt stars.

The systems of Waffenfarbe adopted by the 'General/ Hermann Göring' units were complex, and changed over time. Their traditional Waffenfarbe colour was, as already mentioned, white. This was worn as piping to the service cap, to the tunic or blouse collar where applicable, as the base colour for collar patches, and as piping or underlay for shoulder straps or shoulder boards. White was also used as piping around the black collar patches worn on the black Panzer jacket in place of the regular rose-pink piping normally worn by armoured units, and subsequently as backing to the later-pattern white Panzer collar patches (see 'Panzer uniforms' below).

As the 'Hermann Göring' expanded through regiment, brigade and divisional status and eventually to a full corps, the regulations on Waffenfarbe use changed several times. Initially the white collar



An Obergefreiter from the division wearing the *Fliegermütze* cap, and the later issue *Fliegerbluse* without collar piping; it is worn as per regulation, over a V-necked undershirt and with a removable collar band attached for comfort and cleanliness – just 10mm of this was supposed to show at the neck. Note that unlike those of Army and Navy personnel, the cockade on the cap was a raised boss, not flat-woven. Just visible to the right of his Ground Combat Badge is the top of the Flak Battle Badge. A false 'buttonhole' has been made in the fly front of his blouse to take the ribbon of the Iron Cross 2nd Class. (Robert Noss)

patches carried Waffenfarbe-coloured edge-piping but were worn in conjunction with white-piped shoulder straps. Later the white collar patches were worn unpiped, but the Waffenfarbe colours replaced white on the shoulder straps. Just to confuse matters further, mixtures of both styles seem to have been used simultaneously; in practice it was obviously difficult for front line troops to keep up with the changing regulations when it might be months before they received adequate supplies of new insignia. The various systems of Waffenfarbe are represented here by three illustrative examples from different periods:

Regiment 'General Göring', c.1936–38

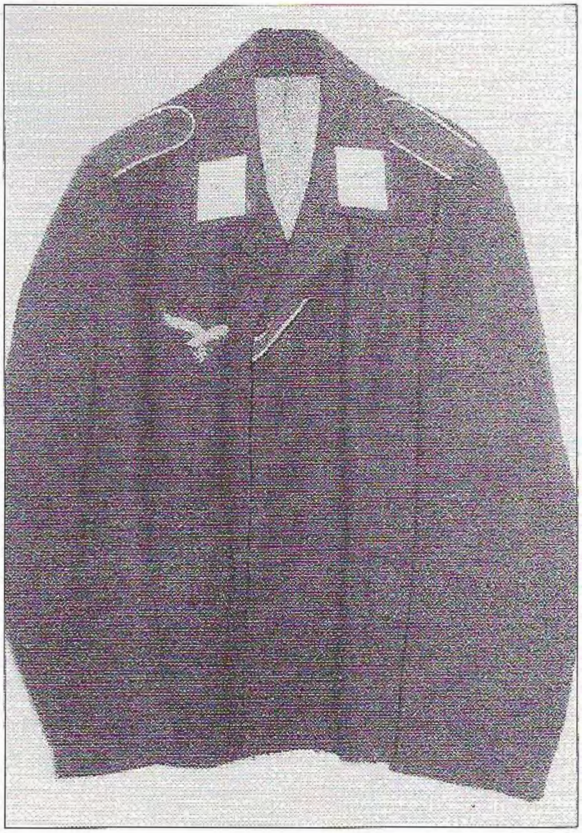
Collar patches:
Officers: White, silver cord piping
Enlisted ranks, Jäger-Btl: White, green piping
Enlisted ranks, Flak-Abt: White, red piping
Enlisted ranks, IV.(Para) Btl: White, yellow piping
Shoulder straps:
Officers: White underlay
Enlisted ranks: White piping

Division 'Hermann Göring', pre-April 1943

Collar patches:
Officers: White, silver cord piping
Enlisted ranks:
Wachregiment: White, white piping
Grenadier-Regt: White, white piping
Panzer-Regt: White, pink piping
Panzerjäger-Abt: White, pink piping
Aufklärungs-Abt: White, pink piping
Artillerie-Abt: White, red piping
Flak-Regt: White, red piping
Nachrichten-Abt: White, golden-brown piping
Pioniere-Abt: White, black piping
Nachschub-Abt: White, light blue piping
Verwaltungstruppe: White, light blue piping
Feldgendarmerie: White, light blue piping
Shoulder straps:
Officers: White underlay
Enlisted ranks: White piping

Division & Korps 'Hermann Göring', post-June 1943

Collar patches:
Officers: White, silver cord piping
Enlisted ranks: White, no piping
Shoulder straps; colours worn as underlay for officers and piping for enlisted ranks:
Divisionsstab: Pink



An unissued post-1940 *Fliegerbluse*, lacking the distinctive white collar piping; the unit cuffband has not yet been added – and indeed, may never have been in some cases. Latterly, the white 'HG' collar patches were also removed as being too conspicuous in the field.

Panzer: Pink
Panzerjäger: Pink
Grenadiere: White
Wachregiment: White
Jäger: Green
Aufklärungs: Golden-yellow
Artillerie: Red
Flak: Red
Nachrichten: Golden-brown
Pioniere: Black
Nachschub: Light blue
Verwaltungs: Light blue
Feldgendarmerie: Orange-red

Military specialists (Wehrmachtbeamte) attached to the division wore the standard Luftwaffe administrative officials' insignia with dark green collar patches, dark green underlay to the shoulder straps, and an intermediate piping to the shoulder straps indicating their specialist

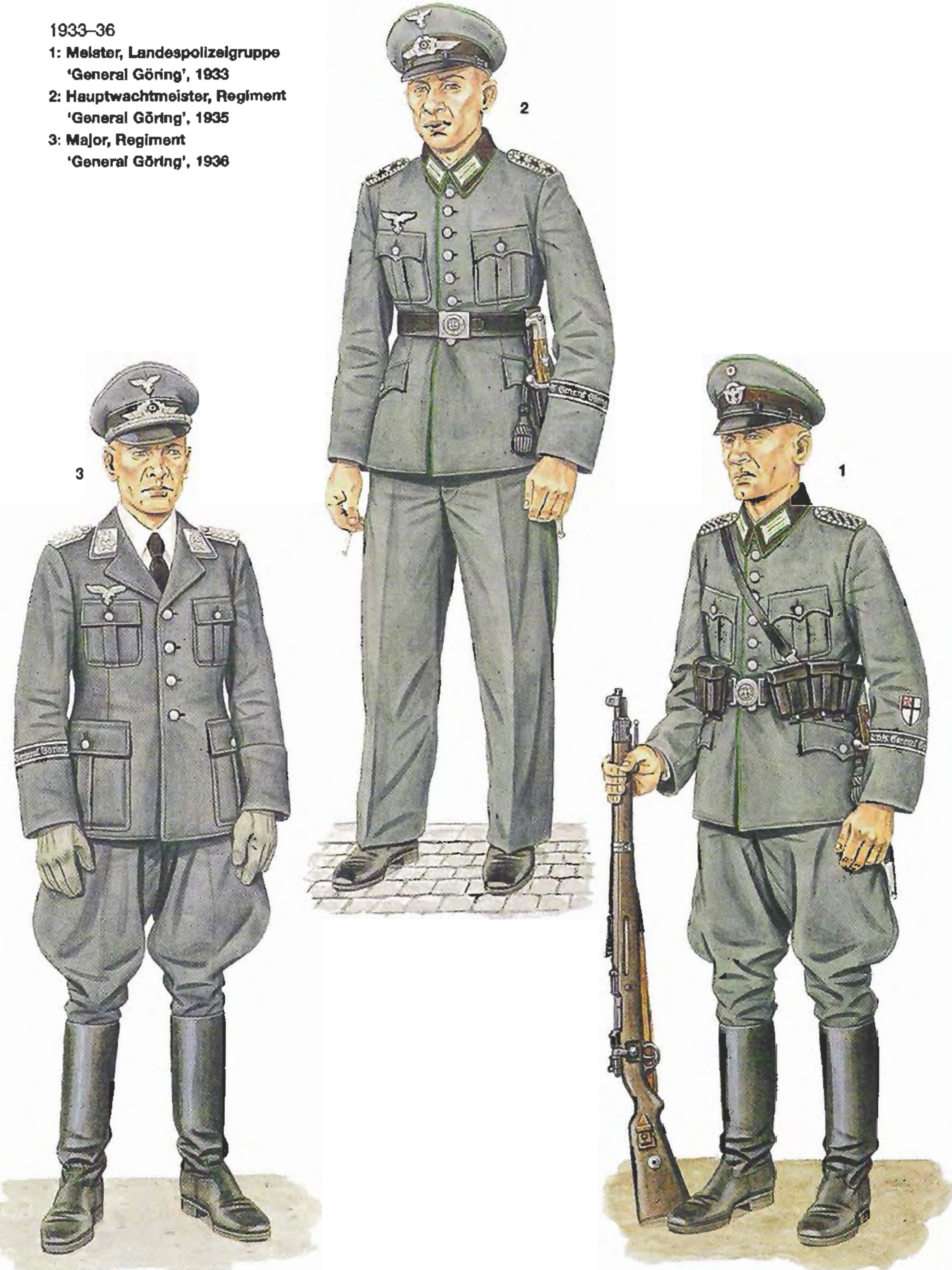
(continued on page 33)

1933–36

1: Meister, Landespolizeigruppe 'General Göring', 1933

2: Hauptwachtmeister, Regiment 'General Göring', 1935

3: Major, Regiment 'General Göring', 1936



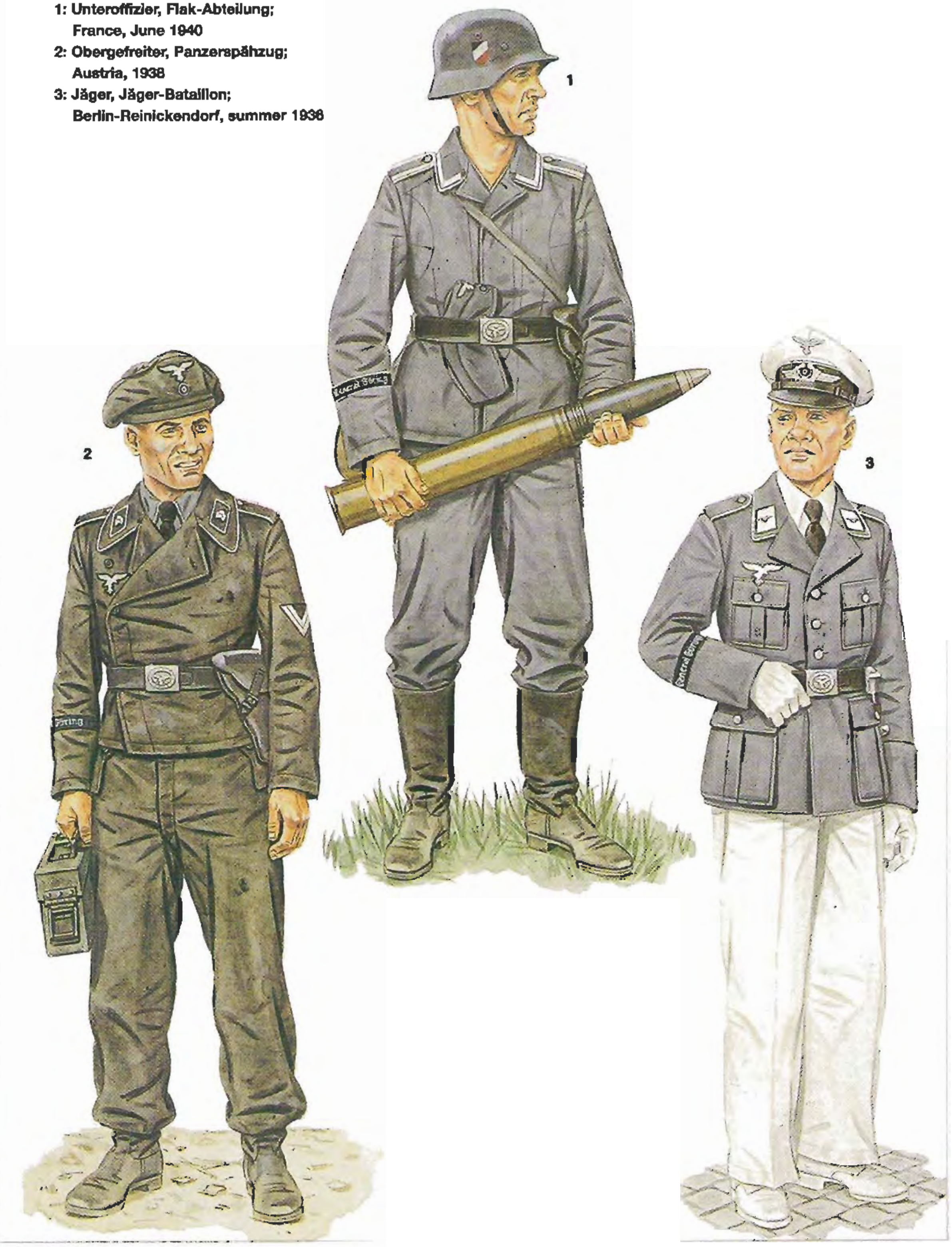
A

1936–40

1: Unteroffizier, Flak-Abteilung; France, June 1940

2: Obergefreiter, Panzerspähzug; Austria, 1938

3: Jäger, Jäger-Bataillon; Berlin-Reinickendorf, summer 1936



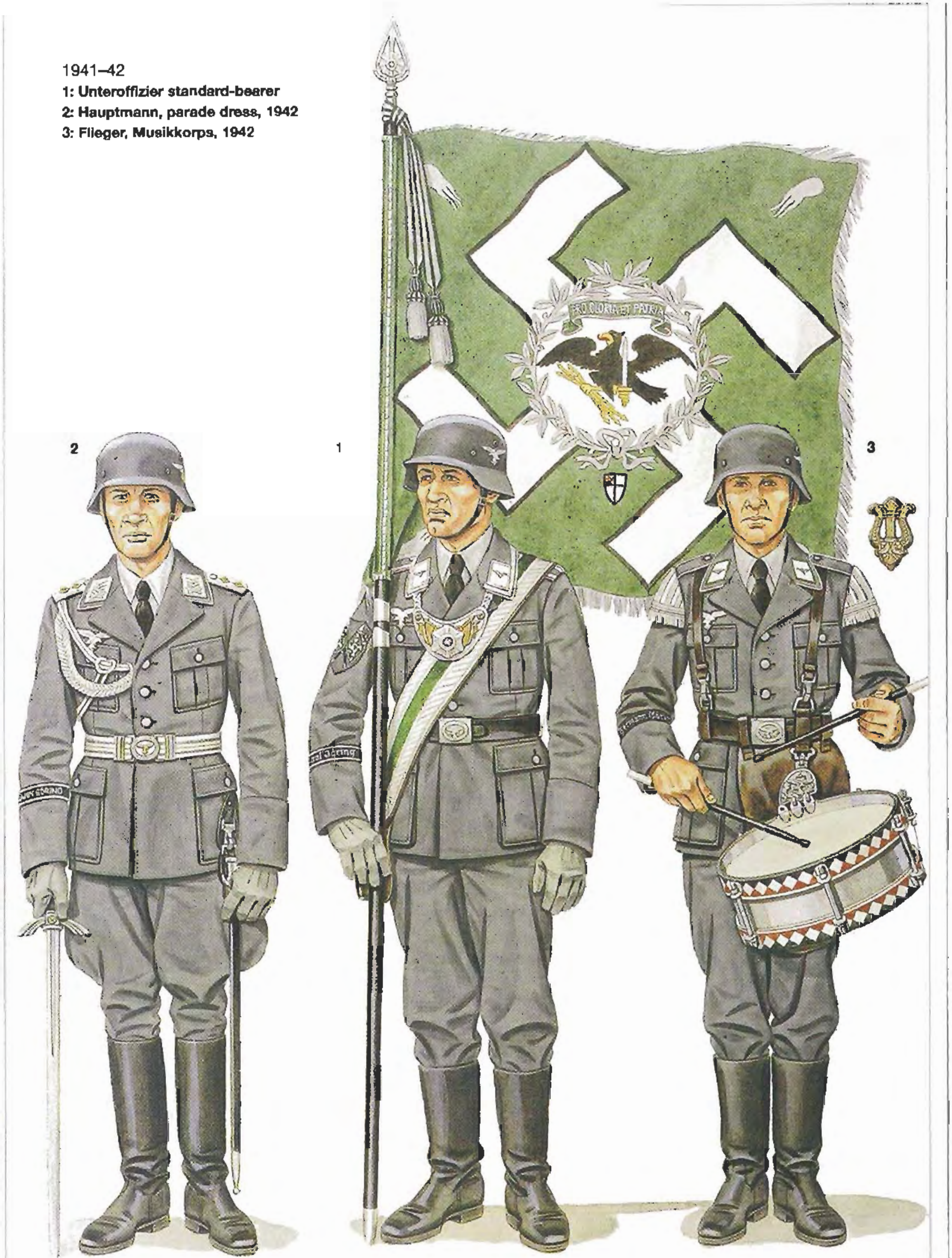
B

1941–42

1: Unteroffizier standard-bearer

2: Hauptmann, parade dress, 1942

3: Flieger, Musikkorps, 1942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PRO GLORIA ET PATRIA

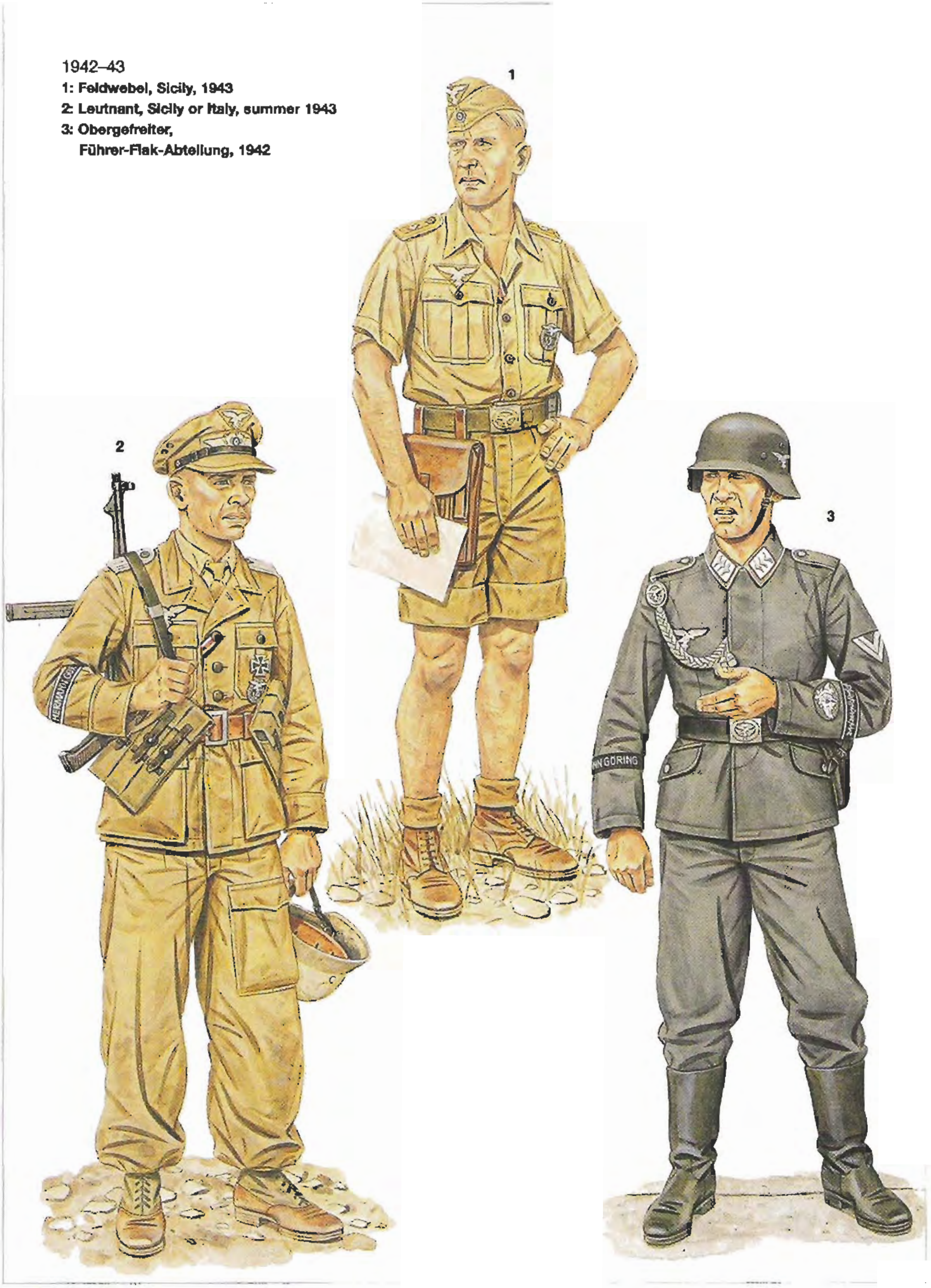
C

1942–43

1: Feldwebel, Sicily, 1943

2: Leutnant, Sicily or Italy, summer 1943

3: Obergefreiter,
Führer-Flak-Abteilung, 1942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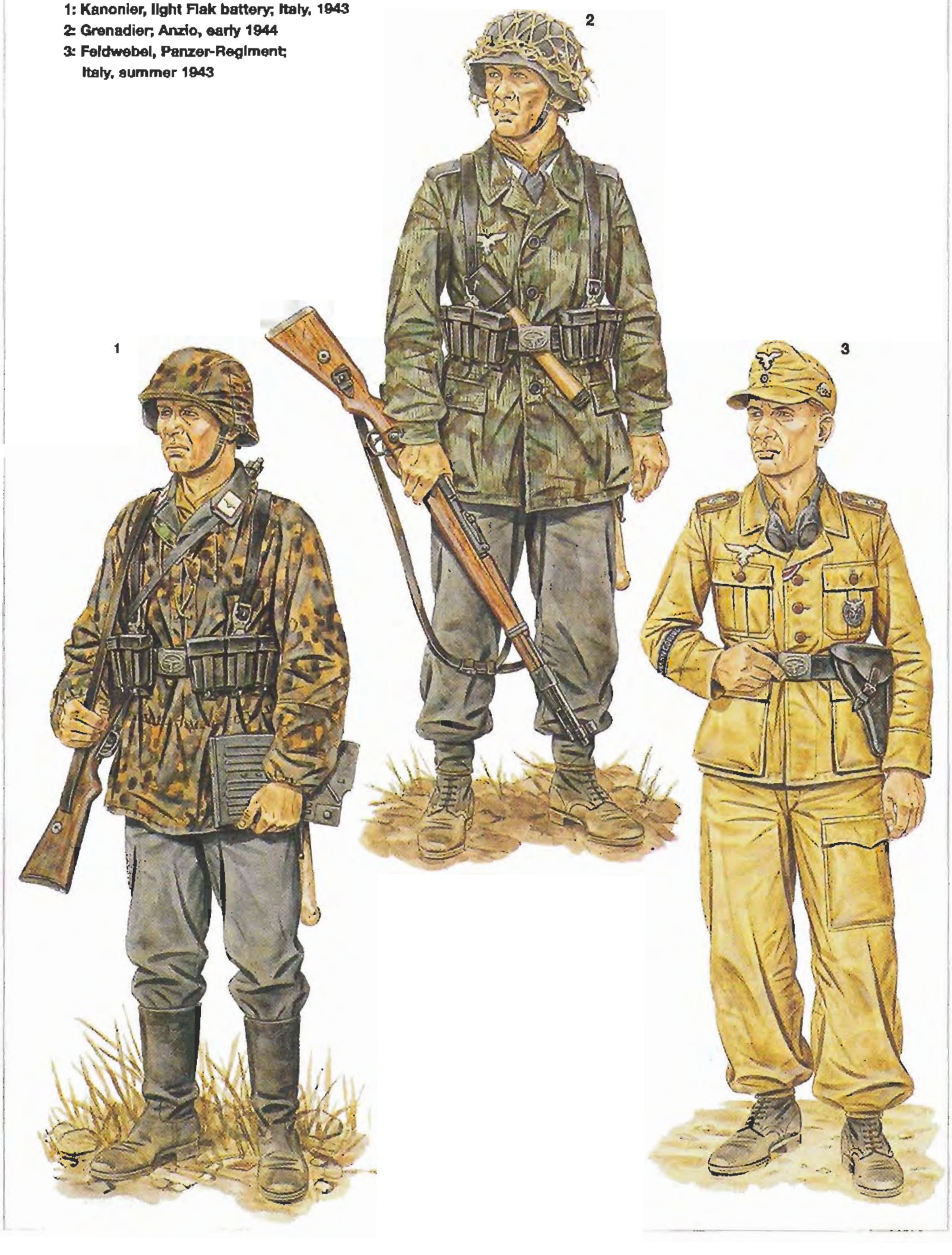
1943–44

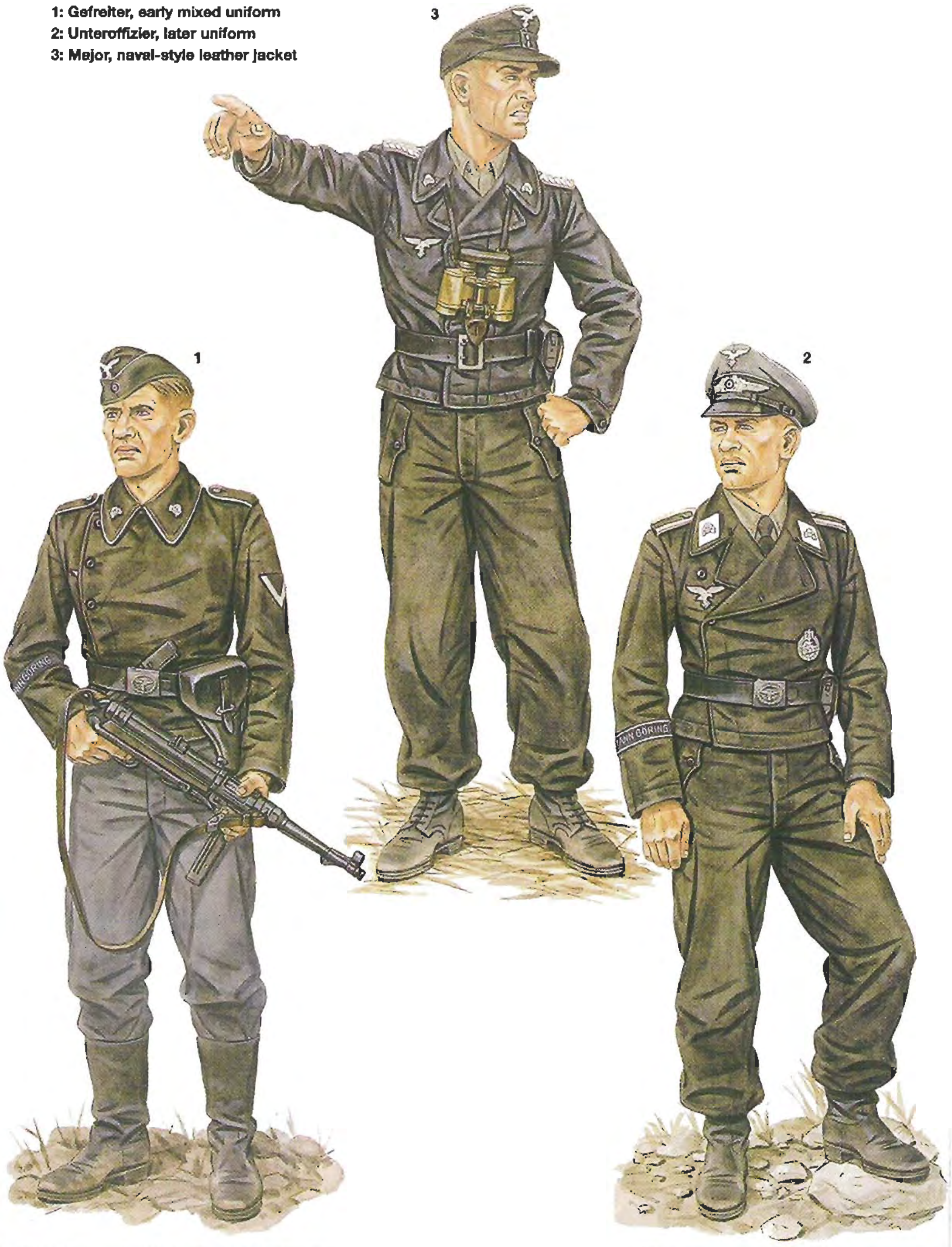
1: Kanonier, light Flak battery; Italy, 1943
2: Grenadier; Anzio, early 1944
3: Feldwebel, Panzer-Regiment; Italy, summer 1943



E

TANK CREWS

1: Gefreiter, early mixed uniform
2: Unteroffizier, later uniform
3: Major, naval-style leather jacket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1
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ANN GÖRING

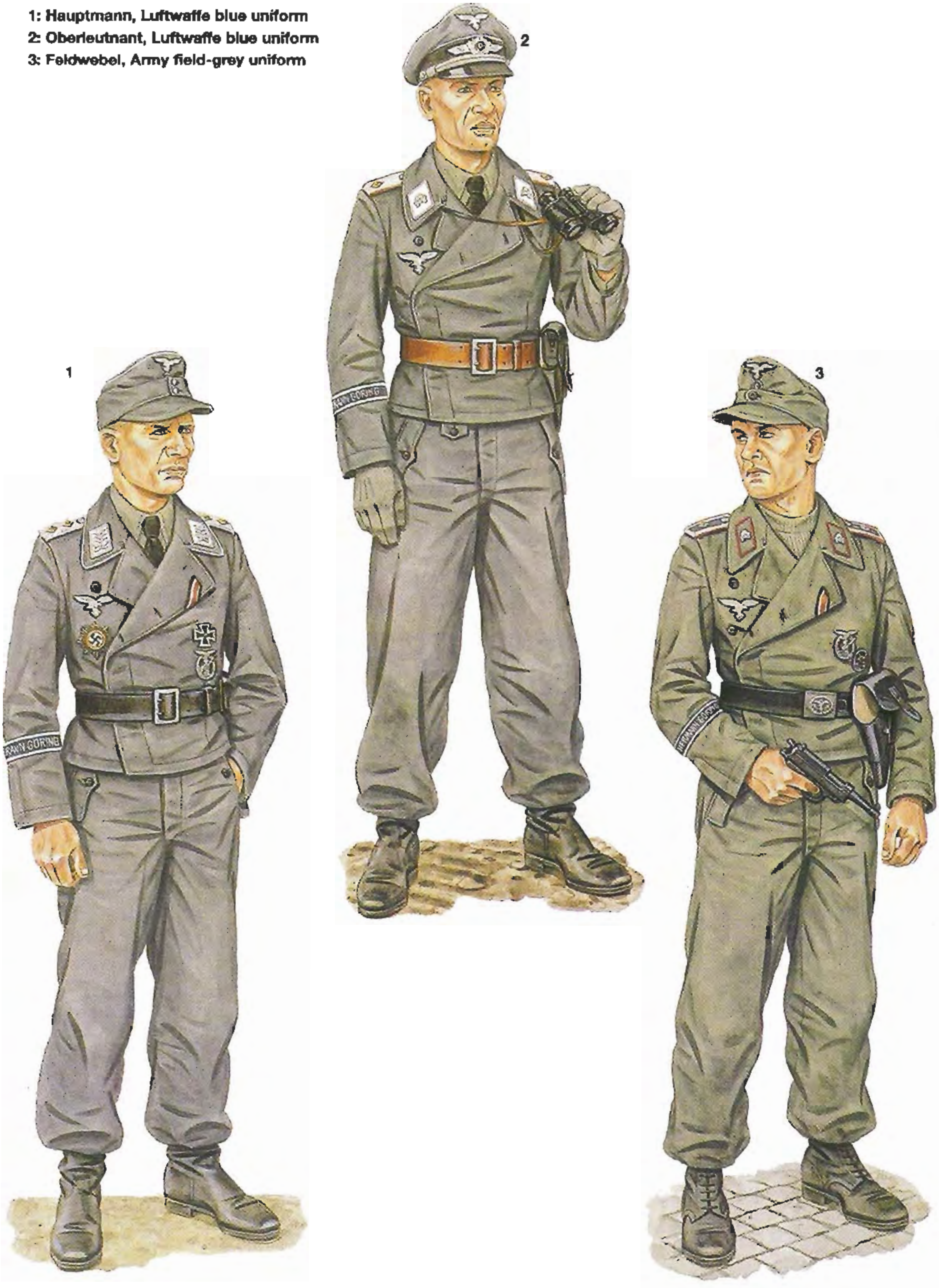
F

ASSAULT GUN CREWS

1: Hauptmann, Luftwaffe blue uniform

2: Oberleutnant, Luftwaffe blue uniform

3: Feldwebel, Army field-grey uniform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HERMANN GÖRING

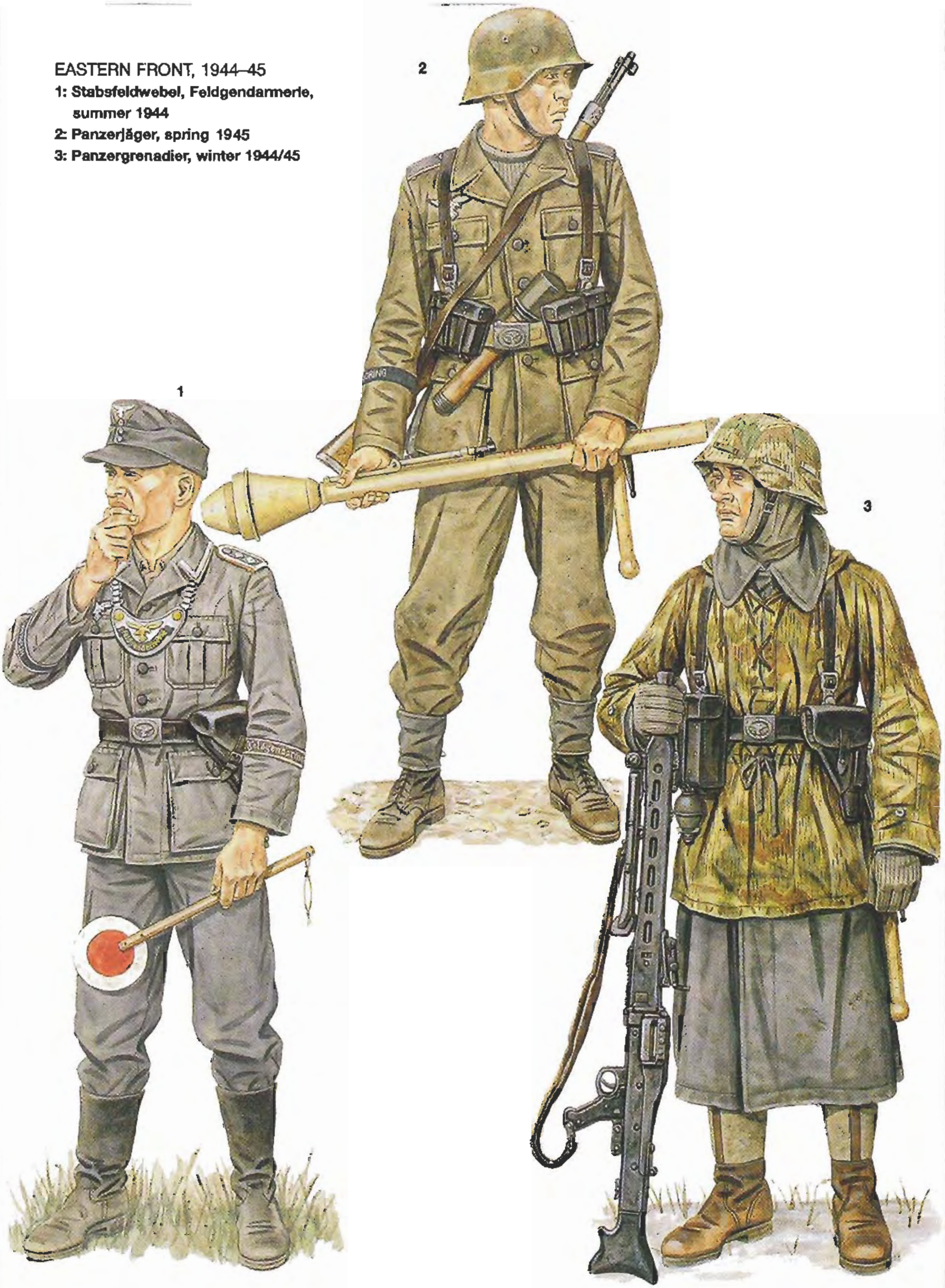
G

EASTERN FRONT, 1944–45

1: Stabsfeldwebel, Feldgendarmerie, summer 1944

2: Panzerjäger, spring 1945

3: Panzergrenadier, winter 1944/45



H

branch. Ordnance officers and medical officers likewise wore the Waffenfarbe of their specialist branch rather than the colours specific to the 'Hermann Göring' – respectively, bright red and dark blue. These were worn as the base colour for the collar patches and underlay/piping to the shoulder straps.

Cuffbands

The cuffbands worn on the lower right sleeve by the Luftwaffe 'General/Hermann Göring' units came in three different patterns.

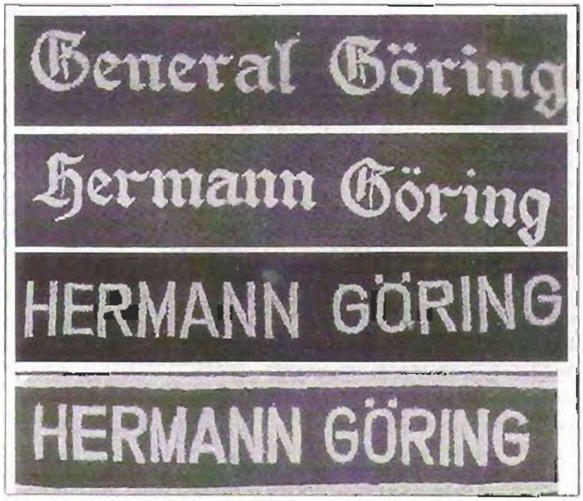
The first pattern, introduced in March 1936, was made from mid- to dark blue cloth, the actual shade of which could vary from batch to batch. The inscription *General Göring*, in Gothic 'Fraktur' script, was machine-embroidered in silver-grey yarn for enlisted men and NCOs, and hand-embroidered in aluminium wire for officers. Further rank differentiation was found on the bands worn by NCOs, which had Russia braid edging. This pattern was worn by many soldiers right through to the later stages of the war, even though it was ordered replaced by the *Hermann Göring* title by August 1942; no doubt those originally issued with it wished to advertise their status as 'old sweats'.

The second pattern was introduced in May 1942, and saw the inscription changed to *Hermann Göring*. It was manufactured in the same materials and with the same Fraktur script as its predecessor. It was, however, very short lived, being replaced shortly after its introduction with the final pattern. Original examples are very rare.

The third and final pattern retained the inscription but altered to upper case block letters, *HERMANN GÖRING*. This final pattern is interesting in that it was manufactured in two forms. The basic pattern, like its predecessors, was embroidered onto a mid to dark blue band; but an alternative version was also produced using a black wool band, presumably for wear on the black Panzer jacket worn by armoured vehicle crews.

Führer-Flak-Abteilung Those soldiers from the 'General/Hermann Göring' units who were attached to Hitler's headquarters, either in the Flak detachment on Hitler's train, or in the guard detachment, wore a special cuffband on the lower left sleeve, with the inscription *Führerhauptquartier*. The first pattern had the lettering in gold Gothic script on a black band, and was made in both machine-woven and embroidered versions. This was superseded in January 1941 by lettering hand-embroidered in aluminium thread Sütterlin script on a black doeskin band with aluminium Russia braid edging.

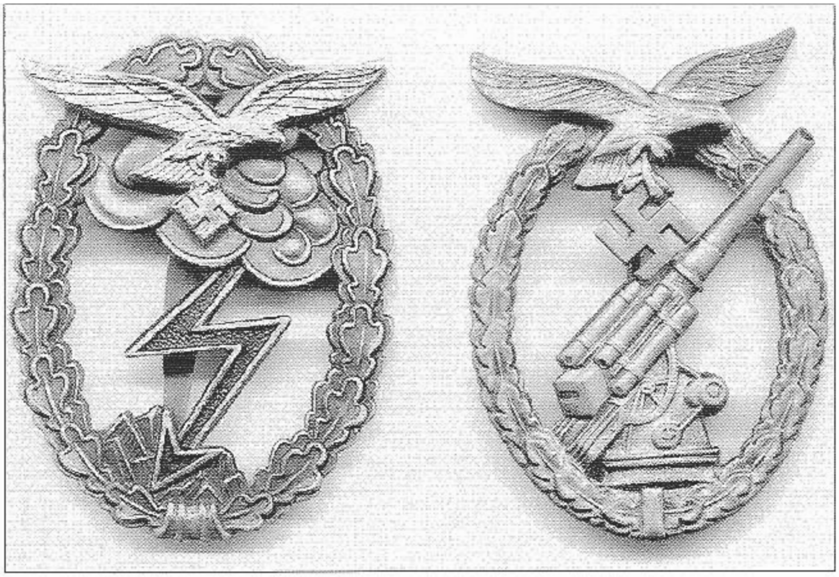
The regimental and divisional cuffbands. (Top to bottom) first pattern, in Gothic script on dark blue, *General Göring*; the short-lived Gothic script second pattern, *Hermann Göring;* block script third pattern *HERMANN GÖRING* on black band for the Panzer-Regt; and third pattern on dark blue, here with Russia braid edging for NCO ranks.



Feldgendarmerie The divisional military police wore on the lower left sleeve the Army-style machine woven *Feldgen- darmerie* cuffband with pale grey Gothic script on a medium brown artificial silk band.

Awards and decorations

Although there were no specific awards intended solely for the 'Hermann Göring' units, there were several that by their very nature were awarded far



Two of the Luftwaffe combat awards most often bestowed on members of the division: (left) the Ground Combat Badge, and (right) the Anti-Aircraft War Badge.

The *Erdkampfabzeichen der Luftwaffe* was instituted on 31 March 1942; until then eligible 'HG' soldiers had been awarded either the Infantry Assault Badge or General Assault Badge of the Army, whose holders now exchanged them for the new badge. Like the Army equivalents, this was awarded for participation in three separate engagements. The eagle and wreath were coloured matt silver with the central motif darkened; embroidered examples were also made but are extremely rare.

The matt silver *Flak-Kampfabzeichen* was instituted on 10 April 1941. Members of the 'HG' Flak units could qualify – under a cumulative points system – in both their original anti-aircraft role and in the anti-tank role. Once the Ground Combat Badge was introduced the Flak badge reverted to its original purpose of recognising anti-aircraft operations only. Again, there are rare examples machine-embroidered in thread for enlisted ranks and hand-embroidered in wire for officers.

more often within the division than in most other Luftwaffe units. The most important of these are mentioned in the captions to the accompanying photographs and colour plates (and are covered in detail in MAA 365, *World War II German Battle Insignia*). Members of the 'HG' units were naturally eligible for the full range of German gallantry decorations.

Gorgets

The **standard-bearers** in I. & IV.Btl, Regiment 'General Göring', wore a gorget quite different from those worn by standard-bearers in other Luftwaffe units. The half-moon pressed steel plate bore in its centre a silver Police star emblazoned with a swastika, flanked on either side by draped banners in gold. In each corner was a fluted gold button; and the plate was suspended by a chain of interlinked circular rings. (For this, and the special standard-bearer's sleeve badge, see Plate C1.)

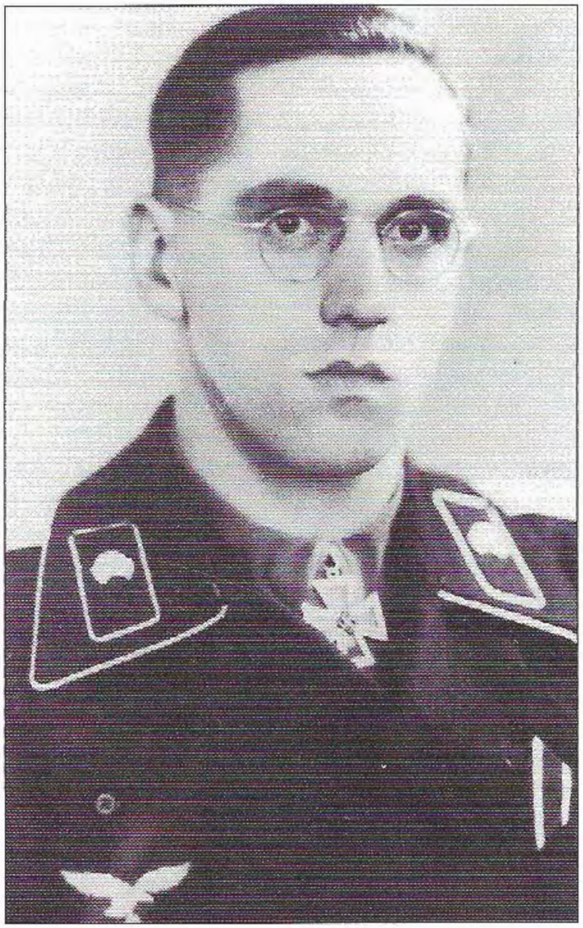
Other sub-units employed the standard Luftwaffe pattern gorget in matt silver with the Luftwaffe 'flying eagle' superimposed over the draped banners, all in a contrasting 'antiqued' silver-grey effect; the suspension chain comprised alternate open and closed square links.

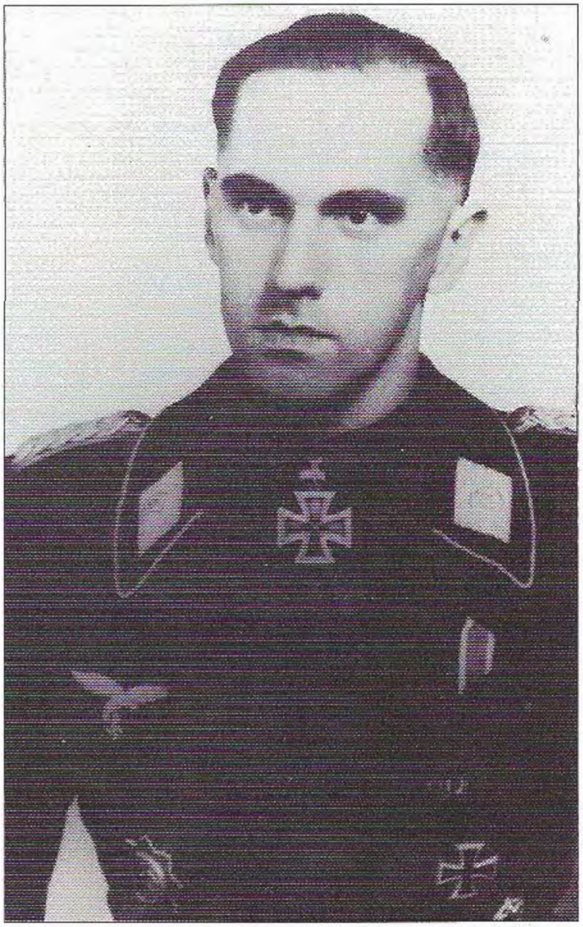
Although not introduced specifically for the military police personnel of the 'Hermann Göring' units, the special Luftwaffe version of the **Feldgendarmerie** gorget has so far been identified in wartime photographs only from this unit; other Luftwaffe ground units, such as paratroop regiments, used the Army pattern gorget. The Luftwaffe version was basically similar to the Army type, having a silver-grey painted finish; a dark grey scroll bore the inscription 'Feldgendarmerie' picked out in luminous paint, below a large Luftwaffe eagle also painted in luminous finish (see Plate H1).

Panzer uniforms

Black Panzer vehicle uniform was worn by members of the Regiment 'General Göring' and the 'Hermann Göring' Division who served with the tank and armoured reconnaissance elements. The jacket worn with this uniform was of the Army pattern, cut from black wool with a slanted front edge and central rear seam, and was normally worn open at the neck, though provision was made for it to be fully closed in cold weather. The cuffs were split, with adjustable button fastening. Despite the fact that it was rare for anything other than a belt and pistol holster to be worn with this jacket, metal belt support hook fittings were provided.

Initial issues were taken from Army stocks and still had the Army-style pink piping around the collar. This quickly gave way to white piping for enlisted ranks, with many officers using the same silver cord piping as



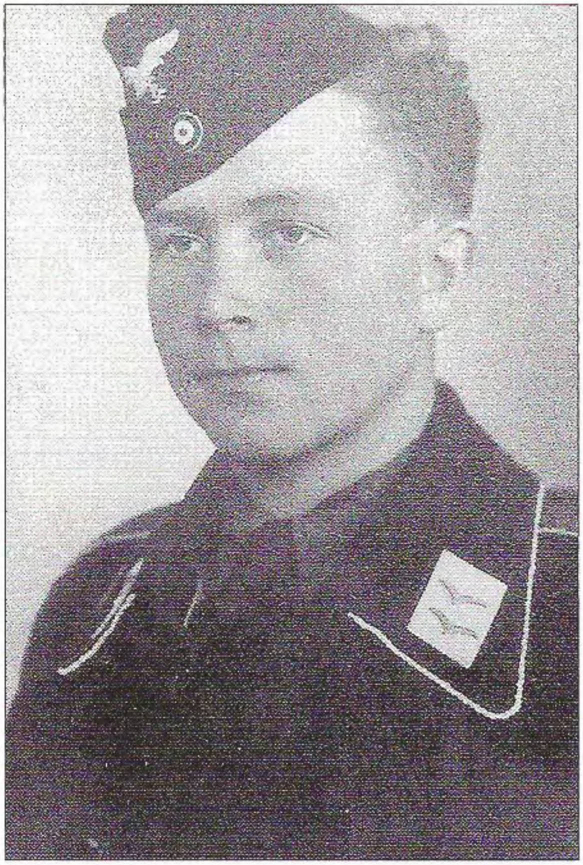


worn on their blue-grey service tunics. In 1943 the size of the collar was reduced slightly, and at around the same time the white collar piping was deleted. The eagle and swastika national emblem worn on this uniform was embroidered onto a black backing, though shortages often resulted in the standard blue-grey backed insignia being used. A special version of the *HERMANN GÖRING* cuffband embroidered on a black base was also introduced for wear on the black Panzer clothing, but once again the standard version on dark blue backing was more often used in its place. Shoulder straps were made in black wool with white piping for use on these jackets.

LEFT **Major Karl Rossmann, commander of Pz-Regt 'HG', wearing the most typical form of dress for tank crews: the death's-head collar patches are the standard Army style in black wool, but with white piping. The collar piping is either white, or silver cord marking officer status. The jacket appears to be worn with a grey-green shirt; these were adopted for Luftwaffe field units in December 1943 and became general issue in September 1944. (Josef Charita)**

RIGHT **Another photograph of Karl Rossmann shows the later Luftwaffe-style rhomboid collar patches in white with added death's-heads, though this jacket bears an original M1935 style of breast eagle with 'drooping' tail. This time the shirt appears to be black. Below and left of his Iron Cross 1st Class he wears the Army General Assault Badge – interestingly, not the Tank Battle Badge. (Josef Charita)**

The 'death's-head' collar patches worn on the black uniform came in several versions. Army-issue Panzer jackets often came with the standard pink-piped black patches already attached; indeed, it appears that many of the Army Panzer personnel drafted into the 'Hermann Göring' continued to wear their Army collar patches after transfer, in some cases even on the tropical tunic (see below). These Army patches were soon replaced by insignia of similar appearance and size but with white piping replacing the rose-pink. Subsequently,



An interesting portrait of a Gefreiter of Pz-Regt 'HG' wearing the black Fliegermütze. Under magnification the white piping around the jacket collar is revealed as 'twist' cord. The white collar patches are from the blue-grey service uniform, complete with *Doppelschwingen* of rank. (Robert Noss)

rhomboid-shaped white wool patches of normal Luftwaffe size were introduced, but with the white metal Panzer death's-heads in place of the usual metal 'wings' of rank. These white patches exist both with and without coloured edge-piping. At the time the coloured edge-piping was deleted from the white collar patches, shoulder straps were supposed to be introduced with appropriate Waffenfarbe coloured piping rather than white. Finally, in January 1944, the white collar patches were deemed too conspicuous for field wear and were ordered removed. After this time the metal Panzer death's-heads were simply pinned directly to the collars.

It would appear from wartime photographs that some 'Hermann Göring' Panzer personnel carried over the use of the white patches with death's-head affixed to their blue-grey service uniforms, although these were intended only for the black armoured vehicle field uniform.

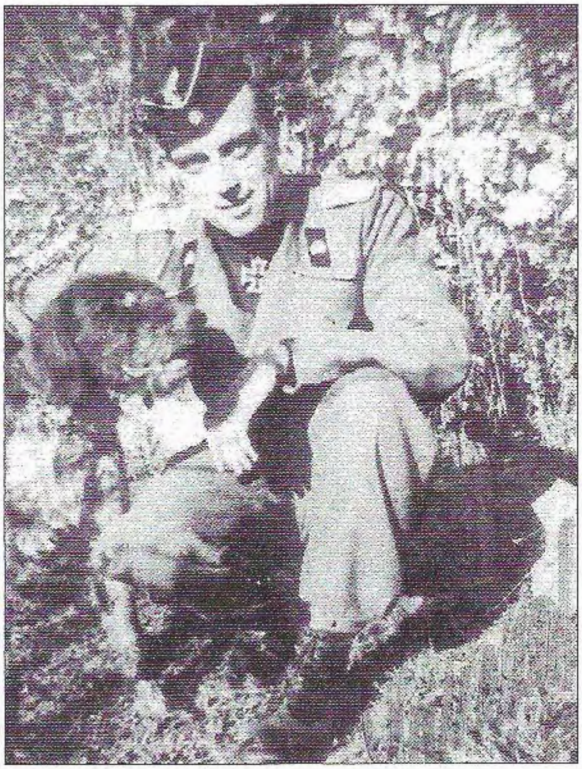
The standard blue-grey peaked service cap was used with the black Panzer dress, particularly by officers but also by some NCOs. The full range of special black Panzer headgear was also produced for the Luftwaffe. The earliest form was the Panzer Schutzmütze, the leather and rubber crash helmet over which was pulled a large floppy black wool beret-type cover. A white-on-black machine-embroidered Luftwaffe national emblem was sewn to the front, over a small machine-embroidered national cockade. This form of headgear was rather short-lived. The popular Luftwaffe Fliegermütze was also made in black wool, with insignia embroidered on a black base; the officers' version was piped with silver cord along the edge of the turn-up, and non-regulation examples are also known with white piping for enlisted ranks. The popular M1943 peaked field cap was also produced in black wool for Panzer personnel, once again with black-backed insignia, either separate or embroidered on a one-piece trapezoid-shaped backing. Finally, it has been noted in wartime photographs that many of the former Army Panzer troops transferred to the division continued to wear their Army field caps, presumably as an indication of their veteran status.

The black Panzer jacket was worn by personnel other than 'pure' tank troops, such as Panzerjäger and even some Panzergrenadiers. Examples of the jacket have been observed being worn by Panzergrenadiers with the standard white collar patches from the blue-grey uniform complete with metal rank wings, or with black Army-style Panzer collar patches with green piping. For a short period it is believed that smaller black patches of the same design as standard Luftwaffe patches, but with green piping, were also worn.

* * *

Special tropical versions of the Panzer jacket in tan-coloured lightweight material are also known to have been manufactured. Photographs exist of members of the Panzer-Regiment 'HG' wearing a tan tropical peaked fieldcap with an SS-pattern metal death's-head pinned to the left side.

Just as in the Army and Waffen-SS, members of Sturmartillerie, Sturmgeschütze, and some Panzerjäger and Panzergrenadier units of the 'Hermann Göring' wore a field-grey version of the Panzer clothing. The jacket was identical in cut to the black pattern, with slanted front panel and central rear seam. Early examples had white piping added to the collar edge, replaced by silver cord piping for officers. This piping was deleted, as from the black jackets, around the end of 1943. The national emblem was embroidered on a field-grey backing, and the standard blue cuffband was worn. Shoulder straps were normally of the standard blue-grey Luftwaffe type, but it is possible that field-grey Army straps were also seen.



Major Hans Sandrock wearing the officers' silver-piped version of the black Fliegermütze, with the Army pattern field-grey assault gunners' vehicle uniform worn within the StuG-Abt 'HG'. The jacket features the collar patches from the black Panzer jacket, and the collar itself appears to be piped silver. This photo was taken after the award of Sandrock's Knight's Cross in October 1944.

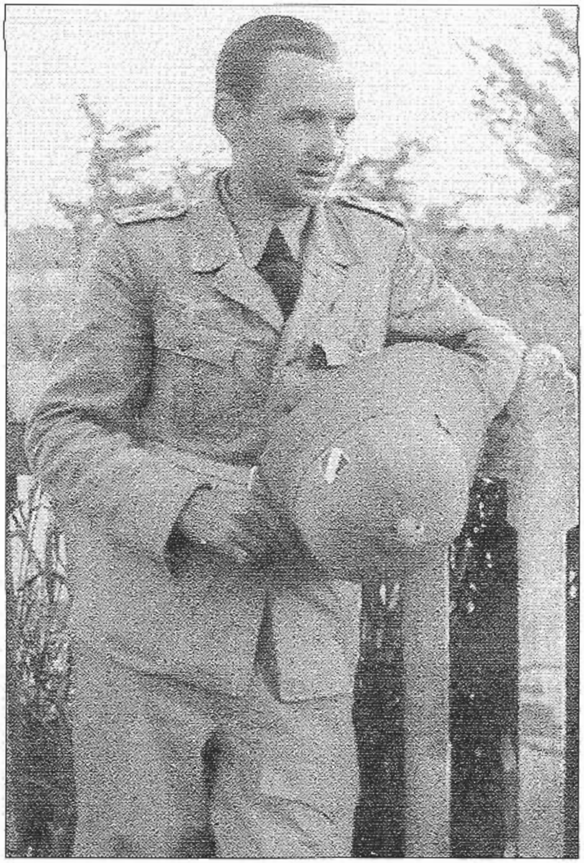
Of particular interest is the extraordinary range of collar patches which have been recorded for use with the field-grey Panzer jacket within various 'HG' units. These include the following – note that in this context 'Army-style' means the elongated type of patch as worn on the black Army Panzer jacket; 'Luftwaffe-style' means the smaller rhomboid shape as standard on other Luftwaffe uniforms; and 'death's-head' means the normal pin-on white metal alloy Panzer badge as seen on Army patches:
Field-grey Army-style patch, white piping, death's-head
Blue-grey Army-style patch, pink piping, death's-head
Blue-grey Army-style patch, red piping, death's-head
White Army-style patch, red piping, death's-head
White Luftwaffe-style patch, red piping, death's-head
White Luftwaffe-style patch, no piping, death's-head
White Luftwaffe-style patch, silver cord officer's piping, death's-head
Green Luftwaffe-style patch, red piping, death's-head
Green Luftwaffe-style patch, pink piping, death's-head
Green Luftwaffe-style patch, yellow piping, death's-head
Green Luftwaffe-style patch, no piping, death's-head.

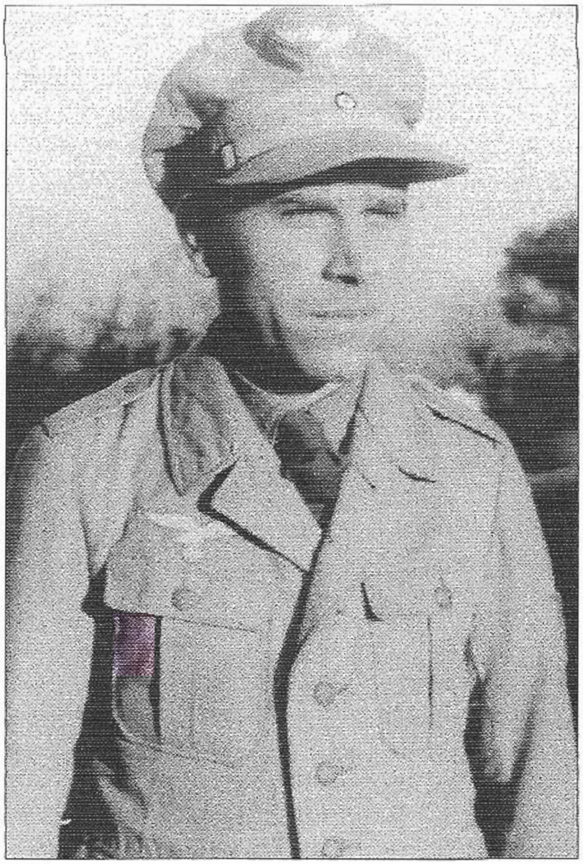
A field-grey version of the M1943 field cap, exactly the same as that worn by the Army, was also used with this type of uniform. The insignia for this cap was normally a one-piece trapezoid-shaped patch of field-grey wool with the Luftwaffe eagle and national cockade.

It is also known that some Panzer-cut jackets were worn in Luftwaffe blue-grey. These fell into two categories: Army issue field-grey jackets which were later dyed blue-grey, and factory-made blue-grey examples. These blue-grey jackets were normally worn with the standard issue blue-grey Luftwaffe Fliegermütze or M1943 field cap (see Plate G).

Tropical uniform

Since elements of the division saw service in North Africa, and for many months in Sicily and Italy, use of Luftwaffe pattern tropical clothing





LEFT **An Oberleutnant from the division in full tropical service dress complete with *Tropenüberfallhose* trousers and the cumbersome canvas-covered cork sun helmet. No cuffband is worn. (Robert Noss)**

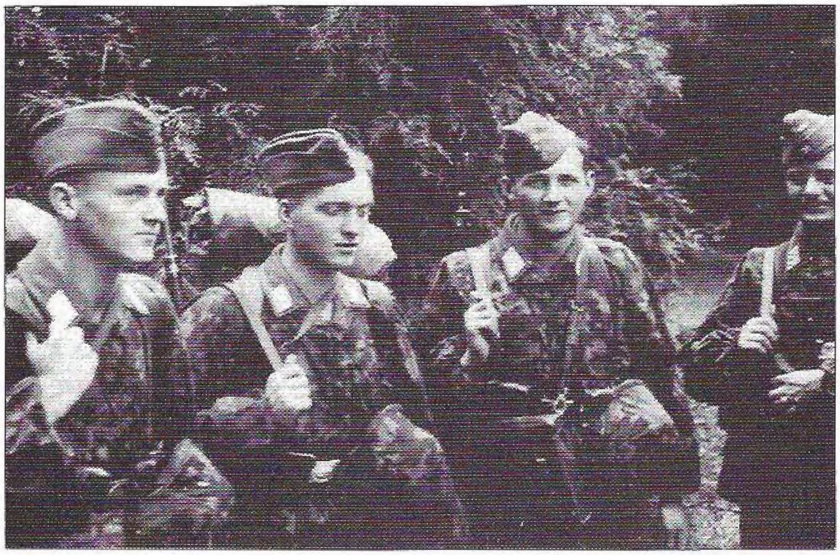
RIGHT **An enlisted man wearing the special tropical service cap, popular with members of the 'HG' Division in Tunisia and Sicily. It was known to the troops as the 'Hermann Meyer' cap, in a disrespectful reference to Göring's boast that if any enemy bomber succeeded in flying over the Reich, then his name was Meyer. Note that only the national cockade is worn on the band, unlike the full insignia shown on page 44. (Robert Noss)**

was widespread. These garments were made of a hard-wearing but lightweight cotton material, coloured a golden-tan shade which contrasted with the Army's olive drab Tropenanzug. Long- and short-sleeved shirts both had long-pointed collars and two pleated patch pockets with scalloped flaps; buttons and loops were provided for attaching uniform shoulder straps, and a national emblem in white on a triangular tan backing was sewn above the right pocket. These were also features of the four-pocket tunic, with pleated breast and 'bellows' skirt pockets; it had six front buttons and a hook-&-eye collar, but this was almost invariably worn open, without collar patches. There were two types of long trousers; the basic issue was plain, but photographs show much use of the M1942 Tropenüberfallhose – loosely cut and baggy, gathered at the ankle with a buckled strap, and with a large pocket on the front of the left thigh. Tropical shorts in matching material were also issued. The *HERMANN GÖRING* cuffband was often seen attached to the right forearm of the tunic. There is plentiful evidence for the use of the cloth-covered cork sun helmet in the 'HG' Division. The tropical version of the Fliegermütze was probably the most common headgear; but members of the division also made widespread use of the special tropical version of the Luftwaffe service cap, Tropenschirmmütze mit Neckenschutze. Made entirely from tan-coloured cotton, including the large peak, this had a wide, unstiffened crown, a tan leather chinstrap and a button-on protective neck flap; it was supplied complete with white-on-tan woven versions of the standard service cap badges. This was presumably intended to take the place of the Army's famous 'Afrikamütze' peaked field cap, which does not seem to have been general issue in Luftwaffe tan cloth – although they are often seen in photographs and high quality examples survive, presumably privately purchased. Army caps were also acquired, bleached, and given Luftwaffe insignia.

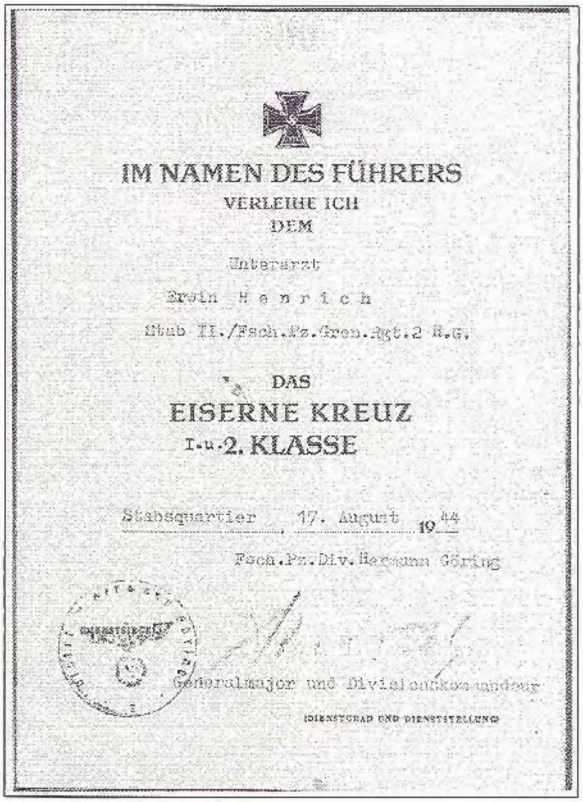
Camouflage clothing

The 'Hermann Göring' Brigade/Division was unusual in that it made use of Waffen-SS issue camouflage smocks and helmet covers from July 1942 onwards. These were only worn by some of the divisional elements, however, and were not general issue. The SS camouflage-printed items were worn during the deployment of divisional elements in North Africa, in Sicily and in Italy. They were thus worn in conjunction with both the tropical and the continental blue-grey uniforms; there is even evidence for the camouflage smock being worn with black Panzer clothing. The smock was a loose-fitting pullover garment with elasticated skirt, waist and cuffs, a lace-up neck opening and access slits in the flanks – it was originally designed to be worn over the personal field equipment, but seldom was. The helmet cover, unlike the Army's simpler drawstring version, was provided with spring-loaded alloy hooks which clipped under the edge of the helmet at the rear and sides.

In 1943 the spotted pattern Waffen-SS items were replaced by the full range of 'splinter' pattern Luftwaffe camouflage clothing. The most commonly used garment thereafter was the three-quarter length camouflage jacket produced for the Luftwaffe Field Divisions. This single-breasted, thigh-length garment fastened by five plastic buttons; it had no breast pockets, but two skirt pockets. No collar patches were applied, but it displayed the national emblem embroidered on either field-grey or camouflage cloth backing. Initial issues had shoulder straps cut from camouflage material, but blue-grey wool uniform straps were applied to later issues.



A group of 'HG' Division grenadiers in full marching order, wearing Waffen-SS camouflage smocks; their slung helmets also have Waffen-SS camouflage covers. One must wonder at the logic of wearing camouflage clothing at the same time as highly conspicuous white collar patches. (Private collection)



IM NAMEN DES FÜHRERS
VERLEIHE ICH
DEM

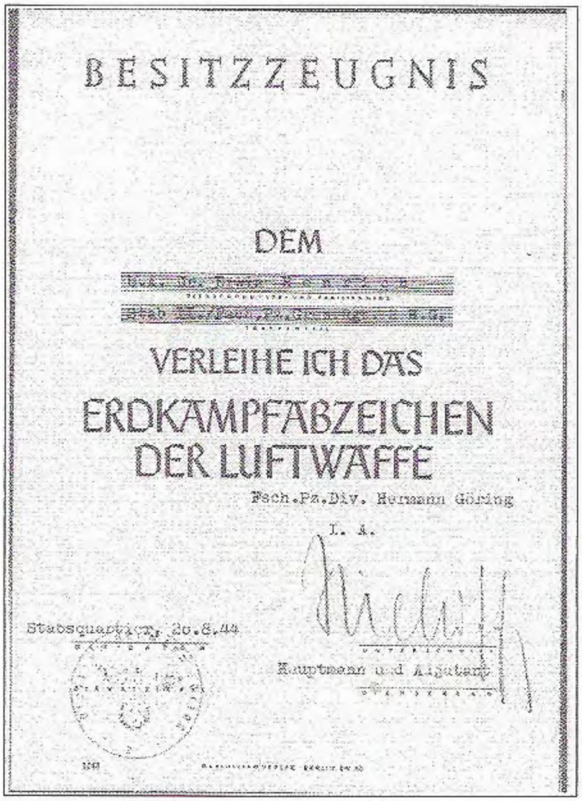
Unterarzt
Erwin H e n r i c h
Stab II./Fsch.Pz.Gren.Rgt.2 H.G.

DAS
EISERNE KREUZ
I.u.2. KLASSE

Stabsquartier, 17. August 1944

Fsch.Pz.Div.Hermann Göring

Generalmajor und Divisionskommandeur
(DIENSTGRAD UND DIENSTSTELLUNG)



BESITZZEUGNIS

DEM

Uz.A. Dr. Erwin H e n r i c h
Stab II./Fsch.Pz.Gren.Rgt.2 H.G.

VERLEIHE ICH DAS
ERDKAMPFABZEICHEN
DER LUFTWAFFE

Fsch.Pz.Div. Hermann Göring
I. A.

Stabsquartier, 20.8.44

Hauptmann und Adjutant

A rare award document showing the bestowal of the Iron Cross in both 1st and 2nd Classes on the same day – 17 August 1944 – to a doctor, Unterarzt Dr Erwin Henrich, on the battalion headquarters staff of II./Fsch-Pz-Gren-Regt 2 'HG'; and his award document for the Ground Combat Badge, dated just three days later. This gives some hint as to the intensity of the fighting during the division's efforts to help stave off the collapse of Army Group Centre. (Mike Bischoff)

A special version of the Panzer jacket was also produced in Wehrmacht splinter pattern camouflage material; this was based on the reed-green lightweight denim type Panzer fatigue jacket and had the latter's large patch pocket on the left breast. The national emblem was as for the Field Division jacket. No collar patches appear to have been worn with this type, which was worn with trousers cut from matching material. An M1943 style field cap was also produced in splinter pattern Wehrmacht camouflage material.

Motorcycle coat

Like all other major field units, the 'Hermann Göring' made extensive use of motorcycles, especially in military police and reconnaissance units. A special coat, almost identical to that worn by Army troops, was issued for motorcycle crews. This was double-breasted, cut in blue-grey rubberised waterproof material with plain blue-grey wool facing to the deep collar. It had an integral waist belt and buttoned cuff fastenings, and could be buttoned at the skirt in such a way as to divide the lower part of the coat into 'leggings' for convenience when astride a motorcycle. Unlike the Army version, it was generally, though not invariably, worn without shoulder straps. NCOs wore a single stripe of aluminium braid along the facing edge of the collar. Although a range of special rank insignia was intended to be worn with this coat it appears to have been only rarely if ever used, most coats being worn devoid of insignia other than the NCO collar braid.

* * *

Command flags and pennants

The command flags and pennants used by the 'HG' units changed considerably during the formation's history. Due to constraints of space, the examples described below are simply a representative selection from the second half of 1943 onward.

Corps commander

Square command flag, quartered diagonally, with the top quarter black, the bottom quarter red and the left and right quarters white. In the centre was a gold Luftwaffe flying eagle.

Divisional commander

A triangular pennant striped horizontally, with equal red, above white, above black bands. A gold Luftwaffe eagle was superimposed on the white central band.

Brigade commander

A triangular pennant, striped horizontally, with black upper and lower bands, and a white central band on which was superimposed the gold Luftwaffe eagle.

Regimental commanders

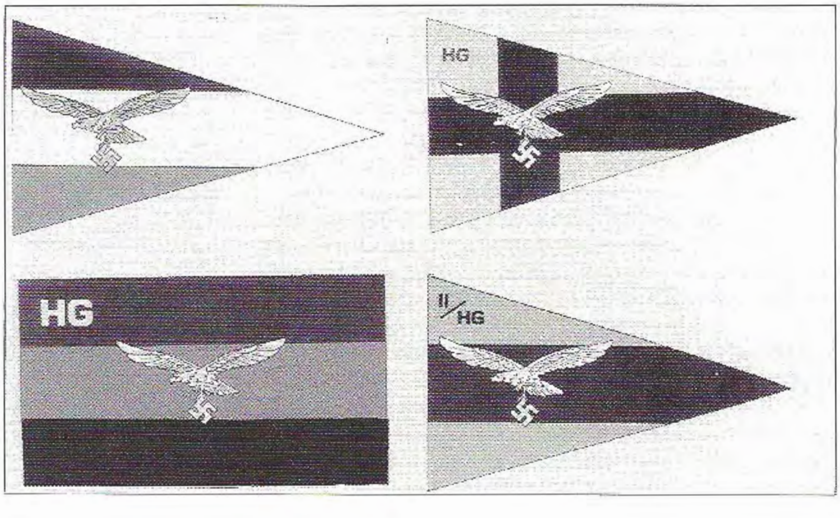
Rectangular flag, striped horizontally, with black upper and lower bands and a central band in different Waffenfarben upon which was superimposed a silver Luftwaffe eagle. The colours of the central band were e.g.: Grenadier Regt, white; Panzer Regt, pink; Artillery & Flak Regts, red. In the top left-hand corner of the flag were the letters 'HG' in white. In the case of the Grenadier Regts the letters were preceded by the numeral '1' or '2' as appropriate. The Flak Regt flag also had the addition of an upward-pointing white arrow in the lower left corner.

Battalion/Abteilung commanders

Battalion-sized sub-units used triangular pennants, striped horizontally, with a black central band on which a white or silver Luftwaffe eagle was superimposed. The coloured upper and lower bands were e.g.: Grenadier units, white; Panzer, pink; Artillery & Flak, red; Supply, light blue; Medical, dark blue. Once again the upper left corner carried the letters 'HG', this time in black and preceded by a Roman numeral indicating the Bataillon/Abteilung number. The lower left corner of the Flak version once again carried an upward-pointing arrow, this time in black.

A slight variant of this style was used by some sub-units, having instead of a black central horizontal bar a black cross. The quartered fields created by this cross were coloured as follows: Panzer-Pioniere (armoured engineers), white; Panzer-Nachrichten (armoured signals), golden-brown; Panzer-Aufklärungs (armoured reconnaissance), golden-yellow.

Typical examples of 'Hermann Göring' Division command flags. (Top left) divisional commander – gold eagle, black, white & red bars. (Bottom left) Regiment – silver eagle, bars black/ Waffenfarbe/black, white 'HG'. (Top right) Some battalions – silver eagle, black cross & 'HG', Waffenfarbe background. (Bottom right) Battalion – silver eagle, black bar, Waffenfarbe background, battalion number & 'HG' black.



THE PLATES

A: 1933–36

A1: Meister, Landespolizeigruppe 'General Göring', 1933

Although the Landespolizei of the different German states were not formally unified into the national Schutzpolizei ('Protection Police') until the following January, this NCO wears a newly introduced 'Police green' uniform with brown collar facings and bright green piping. The status of this senior NCO is indicated by the bayonet knot, his exact rank by the shoulder straps, his prestigious unit by the special cuffband *L.P.G. General Göring* worn on the left sleeve, and 1st Company by the 'Southern Cross' shield. Note that at this date the distinctive Police-style arm eagle badge had not yet been introduced. The rifle is the Kar98A.

A2: Hauptwachtmeister, Regiment 'General Göring', 1935

One of the original members of Regiment 'General Göring' in the first transitional uniform worn upon transfer from the Schutzpolizei to the Luftwaffe. The tunic remains the basic Polizei type, complete with *L.P.G. General Göring* cuffband, but with a Luftwaffe breast eagle added. The service cap has also had its Police insignia removed and metal Luftwaffe badges substituted. The Police belt and dress bayonet are retained.

A3: Major, Regiment 'General Göring', 1936

A field officer of the regiment after transfer to the air force has been completed. He wears standard Luftwaffe officers' blue-grey service dress, with the early-style 'droop-tail' breast eagle; this, and all other insignia, are in 'silver' (aluminium) thread. The underlay to his shoulder straps and base material of his collar patches is the new white Waffenfarbe of the regiment. The peaked cap is of the early 'Tellerform' type, flatter than and lacking the elegant 'saddle' shape of later caps. The Landespolizeigruppe cuffband has now been replaced by a new dark blue title bearing the inscription *General Göring* in Gothic script, and with edging braid for officers.

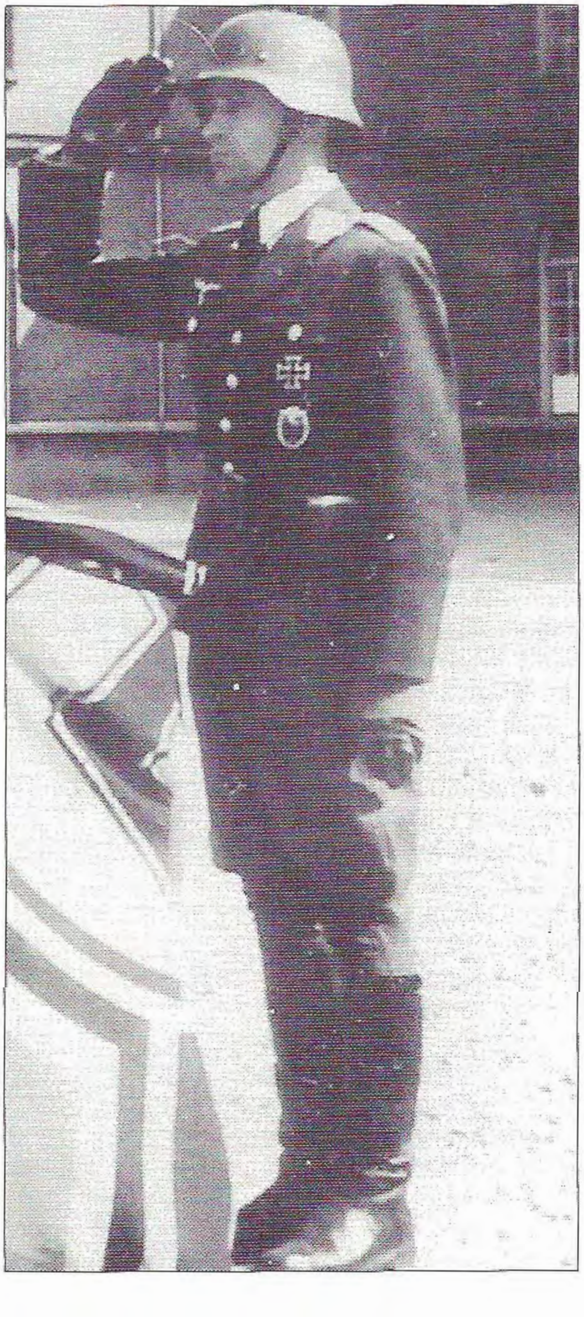
B: 1936–40

B1: Unteroffizier, Flak-Abteilung; France, June 1940

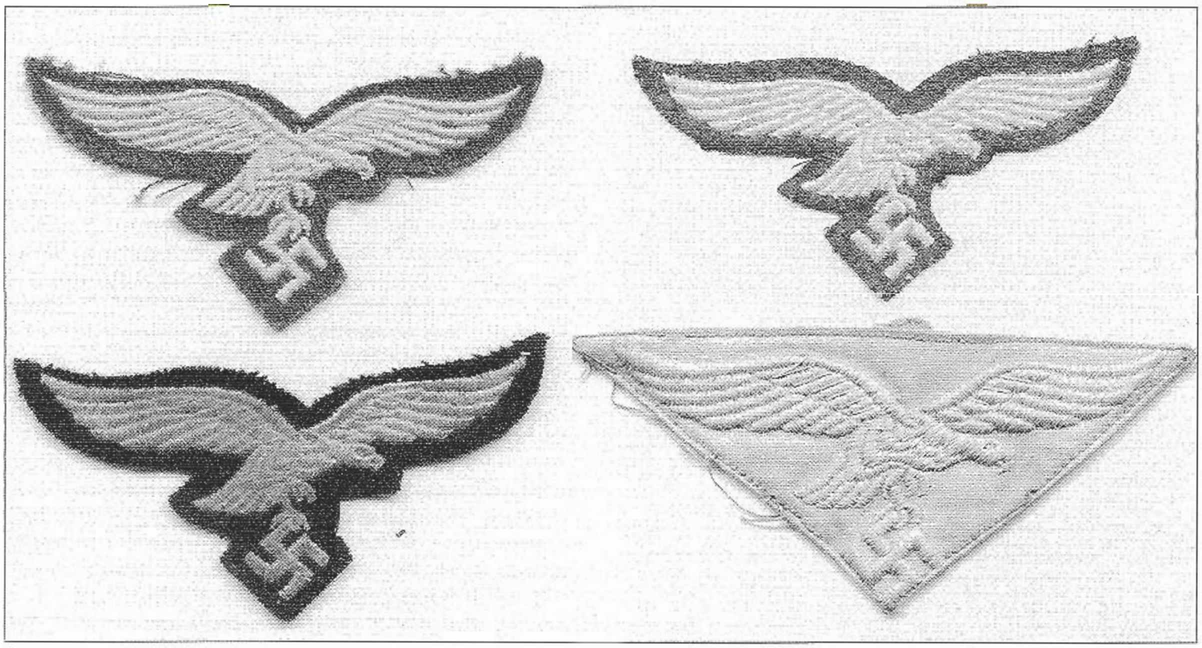
By the outbreak of war the Fliegerbluse had become the most popular form of tunic. This NCO of a heavy Flak battery, handling an 8.8cm ('88mm') shell, wears a pre-1940 blouse without visible pockets and retaining the white Waffenfarbe collar piping outside the silver Tresse of his NCO status – which is also reflected by the Russia braid edge trim to his *General Göring* cuffband. Note, however, that as this was still classed as a working rather than a service dress garment it still did not display the breast eagle. The only features which would identify his exact unit have been temporarily removed as too conspicuous for field use – white collar patches piped in bright red. Nevertheless, at this date the tricolour national escutcheon decal is still worn on the right side of his M1935 helmet. His Fliegermütze is tucked into his belt, which supports a holstered P08 pistol and – hidden behind his hip – the standard breadbag and water bottle; the canvas sling supports his M1931 gasmask in its fluted canister.

B2: Obergefreiter, Panzerspähzug; Austria, 1938

This senior private of the Wachbataillon's armoured car reconnaissance platoon wears the early pattern of Army Panzer troops 'special black uniform', complete with the large, floppy beret covering his leather and rubber crash helmet or Schutzmütze; a Luftwaffe breast eagle and cap



An officer of the Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 'HG' at the saluting dais. He wears service uniform with breeches and riding boots but without such parade embellishments as aiguillettes or brocade belt and sword – cf Plate C2. The Luftwaffe Ground Combat Badge can be seen beneath his Iron Cross 1st Class. (Robert Noss)



The various versions of the national emblem worn by members of the division. (From top left, clockwise:) On field-grey backing for assault gun uniform, camouflaged three-quarter length field jacket and late war field blouse; on blue-grey for Luftwaffe service uniform; on triangular tan backing for tropical shirt or tunic; and on black for Panzer jacket. Identical but smaller examples were made for use on headgear.

cockade have been added to the beret. His collar and shoulder straps carry the regiment's distinctive white piping; the collar patches are in Army style, also with the rose-pink piping replaced by white. The blue *General Göring* cuffband is worn on the lower right sleeve – without braid edging, since he is an enlisted man – and the Doppelwinkel of his rank on the upper left. He carries a steel box with a 250-round belt of 7.92mm machine gun ammunition.

B3: Jäger, Jäger-Bataillon; Berlin-Reinickendorf, summer 1936

The enlisted ranks' walking-out dress was the standard four-pocket service tunic with trousers worn loose over black laced shoes; but during the summer months a white crown cover was worn on the peaked cap, and white trousers and gloves were provided for wear with the blue-grey jacket – we may be sure that the soldiers made the most of this dashingly flamboyant effect during their off-duty hours. His tunic collar and shoulder straps are piped in white, and membership of the Jäger-Btl is indicated by green piping around the edges of his white collar patches. Belts used by Luftwaffe personnel pre-war were predominantly in brown leather, later blackened, and usually worn with a bright aluminium-finish buckle.

C: 1941–42

C1: Unteroffizier standard-bearer

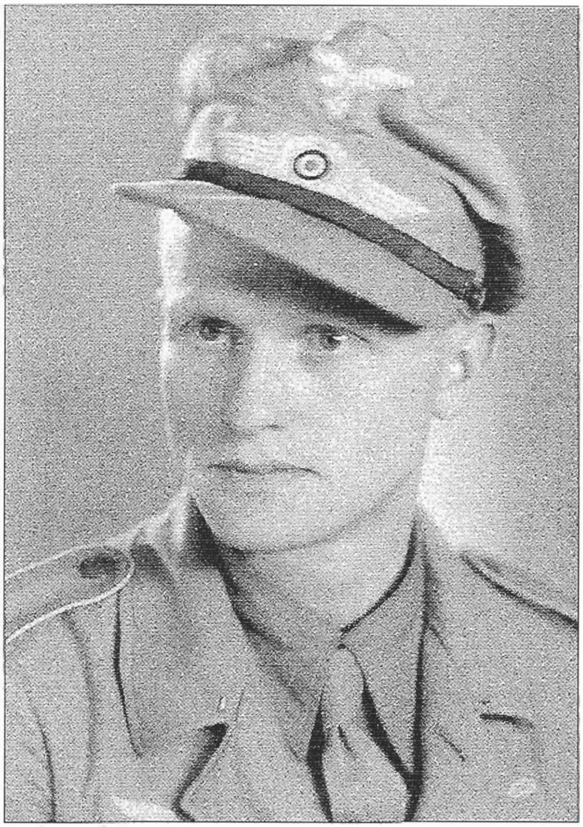
On 13 September 1933 Landespolizeigruppe Wecke zbV was presented with the banner of the Prussian Landespolizei. This square banner in mid-green silk was fringed with silver bullion. A large white central disc, surrounded by a silver laurel wreath tied at its base with a ribbon bow, bore a black Prussian eagle with yellow beak and claws and red tongue, holding in its left talon a gold-hilted sword with a silver blade and in its right a bundle of yellow lightning bolts. Above the eagle was a silver-edged green scroll with the legend 'PRO GLORIA ET PATRIA' in silver. This central motif was superimposed on a large white 'mobile' swastika, the ends of each arm being slightly shortened. In each corner of the field was a flaming silver comet, its 'tail' pointing towards the centre of the banner. Initially I.Jäger-Bataillon's banner featured, just below the central motif, the 'Southern Cross' African colonial tradition shield as described above in the text under 'Police uniforms'. This Polizei-style banner remained in use with the 'General/Hermann Göring' battalions even after their transfer into the Luftwaffe.

The brown leather bandolier worn by standard bearers had wide, heavily embroidered aluminium thread edge facings, a mid-green central stripe and a brown leather 'cup' in which to rest the base of the flagpole. Around his neck the standard-bearer wears the gorget of his appointment, in the Police style as used by I. & IV.Bataillonen rather than the normal Luftwaffe pattern.

The uniform is the standard four-pocket service dress, with white-piped collar and white collar patches, and white-piped shoulder straps; aluminium NCO's Tresse edges the collar and straps. On his right sleeve is a shield-shaped uniform cloth patch depicting crossed examples of the standard. On the forearm he displays the first pattern *General Göring* cuffband in Gothic script with NCO's braid edging.

C2: Hauptmann, parade dress, 1942

For this order of dress standard officers' service uniform is worn with breeches and riding boots, embellished with a silver brocade dress belt with black and red lines and a



A fine study of an Unteroffizier in tropical dress – just visible on his white-piped tan cloth shoulder straps is the copper-brown *Tresse* which replaced silver-grey on tropical uniform. Shortage often led to use of blue-grey straps from the Euorpean uniform. His tropical service cap has full BeVo-woven insignia. (Robert Noss)

circular buckle with a gilt-finish eagle; silver aiguillettes on the right shoulder; and the officers' pattern sword, the *Fliegerschwert*, suspended from an interior belt via a slit through the tunic skirt pocket. On such occasions the steel helmet was worn rather than the service cap; special lightweight alloy versions made specifically for parade purposes were popular amongst senior officers – like the issue helmet they were painted dark blue-grey and bore a reversed Luftwaffe eagle as a silver-grey decal on the left side. Note the collar and white collar patches both edged with fine silver cord; the silver cord junior officers' shoulder boards with white underlay and gilt stars of this rank; and the officers' braid-edged version of the third pattern *HERMANN GÖRING* cuffband in block capitals.

C3: Flieger, Musikkorps, 1942

The service uniform is embellished at the shoulder with the bandsman's 'swallows'-nests', which are worked in aluminium braid on a white wool base; they are removable, being attached to the shoulder by small hooks. A small metal lyre badge **(inset)** was worn on the shoulder strap by musicians of senior NCO and officer rank. The collar patches for the Musikkorps are white, piped in green; and he wears the short-lived May 1942 second pattern *Hermann Göring* cuffband in Gothic script. The belt buckle is in bright matt silver finish and was worn on dress or walking-out uniforms; in the field it was dulled, or painted dark blue-grey.

D: 1942–43

D1: Feldwebel; Sicily, 1943

This veteran senior NCO wears the tropical Fliegermütze, the short-sleeved version of the Luftwaffe tropical shirt (both with national emblems in white on tan triangular backing), tropical shorts rolled at the bottoms, and brown laced ankle boots. The tropical shoulder straps of tan cloth with copper-brown NCO Tresse have the white outer piping of all 'HG' units, and he has the Luftwaffe Ground Combat Badge pinned to his left pocket; but in the absence of collar patches, with their Waffenfarbe piping, there is no way to identify his exact branch of service. In tropical areas belt buckles were often painted tan or olive; they were generally worn on a black leather belt, though canvas webbing belts became common later in the war for reasons of economy.

D2: Leutnant; Sicily or Italy, summer 1943

This junior officer wears the tropical four-pocket tunic over matching tan cotton shirt and tie, and the baggy Tropenüberfallhose (literally, 'tropical attack trousers') gathered at the ankle over short Tropenschnürschuhe with laced canvas uppers on brown leather feet. The tunic has shoulder boards of rank and a national emblem but was almost invariably worn without collar patches. The final pattern divisional cuffband, in officers' braid-edged form, is proudly worn on the right sleeve; his combat awards are the Ground Combat Badge, the Iron Cross 1st Class, and – like D1 – the buttonhole ribbon of the 2nd Class. His headgear is the popular tropical service cap for all Luftwaffe ranks, irreverently known to the men as the 'Hermann Meyer' cap – a disrespectful reference to one of Göring's boasts to the effect that if any enemy bomber flew over Germany, 'you can call me Meyer'. The Luftwaffe officer's brown field belt with open frame buckle supports two canvas triple magazine pouch sets for his MP40 sub-machine gun, and he carries a sand-painted M1935 steel helmet.

D3: Obergefreiter, Führer-Flak-Abteilung, 1942

This senior private is serving with the IV. or 'Führer's Own' Detachment of the Flak-Regiment 'HG' based in Berlin, and the basic uniform of a wartime Flak soldier therefore boasts various special details. Although its breast eagle and pocket flaps mark his Fliegerbluse as being of post-1940 manufacture, note that the white 'HG' piping still edges the collar, which is – unusually – fastened across at the neck. The white collar patches with red piping identify the division and the Flak units respectively. He does not sport the pin-on Flak Battle Badge, but on his lower left sleeve is the wreathed, winged gun badge of the qualified Flak gunner with at least nine months' service. Above this he wears the special cuffband for Hitler's headquarters units, inscribed *Führerhauptquartier* in aluminium Sütterlin script on black; on the right sleeve this is balanced by the usual divisional cuffband, and on his right shoulder and breast he displays one of the Luftwaffe's graded marksmanship lanyards.

E: 1943–44

E1: Kanonier, light Flak battery; Italy, 1943

The basic dress is the Fliegerbluse with blue-grey service dress trousers and marching boots; the red-piped white collar patches identify a 'Hermann Göring' Flak or artillery unit, and the magazine he carries narrows this down to a 2cm automatic cannon battery. Of special note are the Waffen-SS camouflage smock and helmet cover, of M1940 type and here in the so-called 'plane tree' pattern, autumn/winter side exposed. The SS garments were not universally issued throughout the division, but only to selected sub-units. His gun crew duties do not absolve him from carrying full rifleman's equipment: the Kar98k, belt, Y-straps, two triple rifle cartridge pouches, and – largely obscured here – breadbag, water bottle, entrenching spade, bayonet, and gasmask.

E2: Grenadier; Anzio, early 1944

An infantryman from the division around the time of the battles for Anzio and Nettuno. He wears the special three-quarter length Luftwaffe camouflage jacket for ground troops, in standard Wehrmacht 'splinter' pattern material, over blue-grey wool blouse and trousers, canvas anklets and ankle boots. His helmet is the later M1942 style with a 'raw' unrolled edge, here with a simple string netting cover. The division's white collar patches are nearly hidden, but he has attached uniform shoulder straps to the camouflage jacket, which was issued complete with the breast eagle. An M1924 stick grenade is thrust into his rifle belt.

E3: Feldwebel, Panzer-Regiment; Italy, summer 1943

Despite its regulation appearance, his cap is not Luftwaffe issue, but either privately purchased or a bleached Army example which was once olive drab; such personal initiatives were not uncommon in the Wehrmacht (see text, page 39). Wartime photographs show that some members of the divisional tank regiment took to wearing an SS-pattern metal skull pinned to the left side of their caps – presumably in reference to the Panzer arm, otherwise only indicated by the rose-pink piping on the tropical shoulder straps.

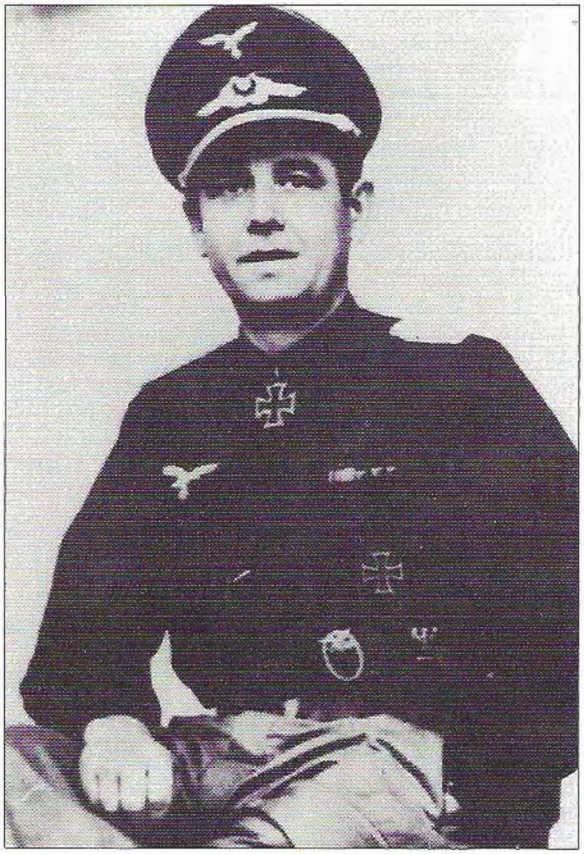
F: TANK CREWS

This plate shows just some of the many variations in clothing and insignia worn by men of the Panzer-Regiment 'Hermann Göring':

F1: This Gefreiter wears a common mixture of garments comprising the black wool Panzer jacket with blue-grey Luftwaffe trousers tucked into marching boots. The jacket, here worn buttoned across at the neck, has the white piping to the collar found on early examples, but no collar patches – the metal death's-heads are pinned directly to the collar. He wears the *HERMANN GÖRING* cuffband, and black shoulder straps piped in white. Note that this example of the black wool Panzer version of the Fliegermütze features non-regulation white piping. Away from his vehicle, he is armed with the MP40 normally carried in the turret, in addition to the P38 pistol in its 'hard shell' first type holster.

F2: An Unteroffizier wears the later version of the tunic, without collar piping and with the Luftwaffe-style collar patches in white with attached metal death's-heads. His shoulder straps are the later type with Panzer pink Waffenfarbe piping. His NCO's braid-edged cuffband is the special version embroidered on black specifically for wear on the Panzer jacket; he also displays the Army-type Tank Battle Badge. His headgear is the standard NCO's blue-grey service cap, with white 'HG' piping.

F3: This Major wears the rare leather version of the Panzer jacket. Although its cut closely resembles that of the wool jacket, there is evidence to suggest that it was originally naval issue – examples survive with Kriegsmarine stampings, and photographs show it being worn by U-boat crews. It has the death's-heads pinned directly to the collar, and shoulder boards in matt silver braid on a Panzer pink underlay are attached. His headgear is the officers' version of the black Panzer M1943 universal field cap, with aluminium braid piping to the crown. His 6x30 field binoculars are painted in the dark yellow factory finish of most Wehrmacht equipment from mid-1943.



Major Walter Kluge wears an interesting uniform assortment, whose interpretation is hampered by this very dark print. The peaked cap is from the blue-grey uniform, and the trousers (note thigh pocket) are clearly the tan *Tropenüberfallhose*. The shirt is either black or dark grey, and is worn with full insignia, decorations, ribbons and battle badges. Such mixtures of different coloured clothing were common at the front. (Josef Charita)

G: ASSAULT GUN CREWS

Just three examples of the extraordinarily varied uniforms and insignia worn by the divisional and corps self-propelled armoured artillery units of several types.

G1: This Hauptmann wears the special Luftwaffe blue-grey version of the Panzer vehicle uniform. Shoulder boards on white underlay and silver-edged white collar patches are both from the blue-grey service uniform; the collar is also piped with aluminium cord, as is the crown of the blue-grey universal field cap. Typically, in the field a plain leather belt with double-claw buckle is worn. His awards include both classes of Iron Cross, the German Cross in Gold on his right breast, and the Flak War Badge – suggesting that he may serve in a Panzerjäger anti-tank unit?

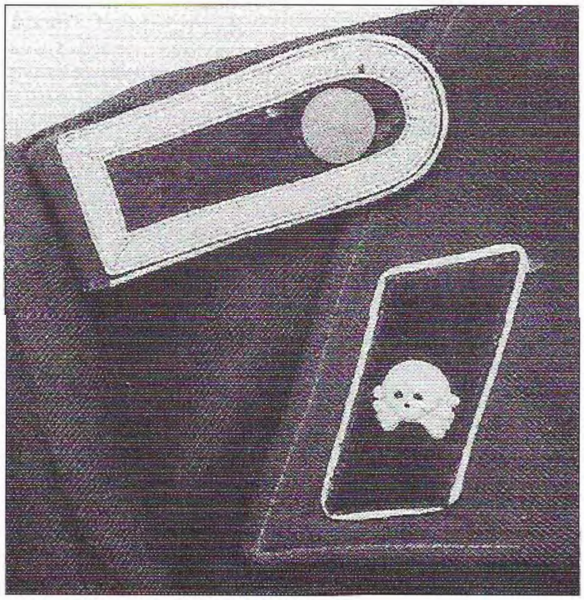
G2: An Oberleutnant from the Sturmartillerie also wearing the blue-grey Panzer uniform, with the officers' service dress cap. His shoulder boards have regulation red artillery underlay, and his death's-head collar patches are the white Luftwaffe shape with aluminium cord edging as sported by some (but by no means all) officers. Like G1, he wears the officers' version of the final pattern cuffband. He is armed with a P38 in a second type 'soft shell' holster.

G3: A Feldwebel in command of an assault gun wears a Panzer jacket and trousers in the field-grey colour used by the Army, also widely worn within the 'HG' Division. The shoulder straps, with silver-grey Tresse and red artillery piping, might be from either Army stocks on field-grey cloth or blue-grey Luftwaffe versions; the collar patches are Army-style, of elongated Panzer type in field-grey with red edge piping and pin-on death's-heads; and his breast eagle is worked on a field-grey wool base – as are the Luftwaffe insignia on the field-grey Army M1943 cap. He too wears the Flak Battle Badge, and a black Wound Badge.

H: EASTERN FRONT, 1944–45

H1: Stabsfeldwebel, Feldgendarmerie, summer 1944

This senior NCO of the divisional military police wears an interesting lightweight blue-grey drill version of the four-pocket service tunic with standard wool trousers. There are no collar insignia, but note the grey silk subdued NCO Tresse edging. His shoulder straps are piped in the orange Waffenfarbe of the MPs and on his lower left sleeve is the grey-on-brown *Feldgendarmerie* cuffband, opposite the divisional cuffband on the right. Note the Luftwaffe version of the Feldgendarmerie gorget, shown in photographs of the 'HG' Division; and the traffic direction wand.



H2: Panzerjäger, spring 1945

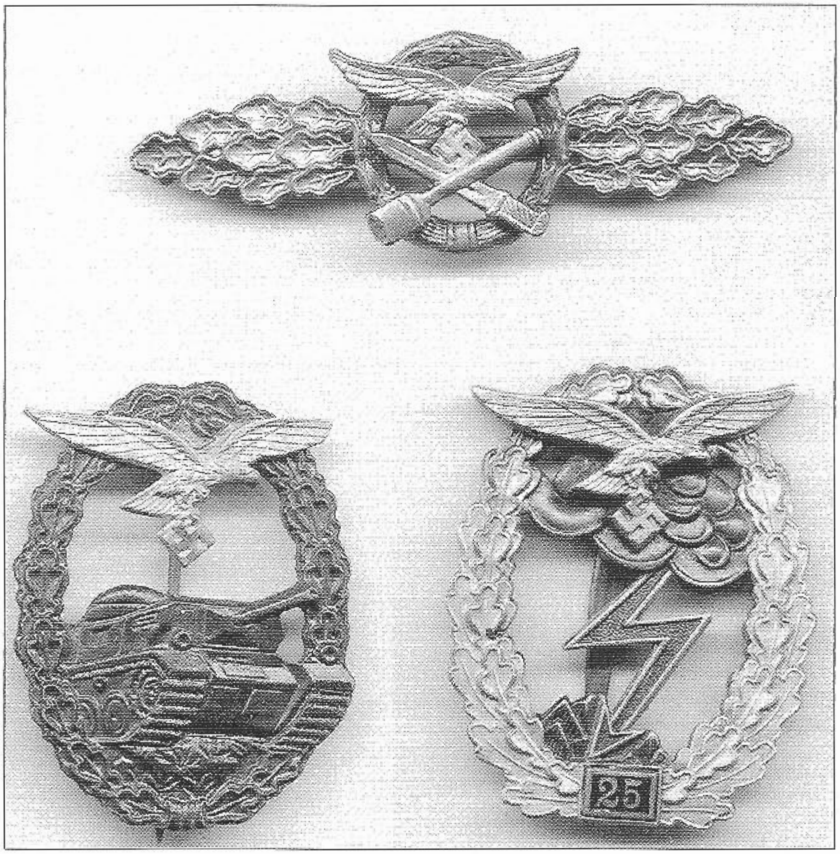
A mechanised infantryman from one of the two divisions of the 'HG' Corps wears the special four-pocket Luftwaffe field blouse introduced towards the end of the war. Cut in 'field-grey' wool with a distinct brownish hue, it had a higher content of recycled 'shoddy' than early war garments. It features a national emblem on field-grey backing; shoulder straps from the blue-grey service dress, with the pink piping of an anti-tank unit; and the *HERMANN GÖRING* cuffband. He wears matching trousers and ankle boots with canvas gaiters. His helmet has a roughened camouflage finish achieved by mixing sand with the paint. Although he has a webbing belt the Y-straps and pouches are still of leather. In addition to his late production Kar98k rifle he carries a Panzerfaust 30 single-shot anti-tank weapon.

H3: Panzergrenadier, winter 1944/45

This machine gun crew 'first gunner' is wearing typical cold weather gear for the last winter of the war. His blue-grey wool Luftwaffe greatcoat, somewhat inadequate for the severity of an Eastern European winter, is worn underneath an Army second type hooded smock in 'tan water pattern' camouflage; in late summer and autumn 1944, 'HG' combat units received the latest Army camouflage items. He has an Army second type 'splinter' camouflage cover over his helmet, and a woollen toque underneath it to protect his ears and neck. The leather and felt boots were produced in an attempt to fend off frostbite. The white 'HG' rank patches are no longer being displayed on the coat collar, and only the blueish shade of the greatcoat gives a hint of his service, let alone his unit. He carries the MG42 machine gun, and wears its spares/tools pouch (with an attached M1939 'egg' grenade) and a holstered P38 on his belt.

A detail close-up of the insignia on a 'Hermann Göring' issue Panzer jacket with white-piped collar patches and shoulder straps. The Luftwaffe-style *Tresse* on the Unterfeldwebel's shoulder strap is of a 'chequered' pattern, distinctly different under magnification from the 'diamond' pattern weave used for Army braid. (Helmut Weitze)

OPPOSITE **Major Karl Rossmann once again, but this time wearing the rare black leather version of the Panzer jacket, with the death's-heads pinned directly to the collar; see Plate F3. Similar leather jackets are also known to have been worn in Army and Waffen-SS tank units. (Josef Charita)**



Three Luftwaffe awards almost certainly bestowed on members of the division 'on paper', but for which no evidence exists of actual physical award: (top) Close Combat Clasp, (left) Tank Battle Badge, (right) Ground Combat Badge for 25 engagements.

The *Nahkampfspange der Luftwaffe* was instituted on 3 November 1944, to recognise participation in close-quarter fighting; until then any Luftwaffe personnel who qualified had been awarded the Army clasp. It was authorised in three grades – Gold, Silver and Bronze – with the central motif in a silver colour for all three; the Gold class was to be awarded for 50 accumulated days of close combat, the Silver for 30 and the Bronze for 15 days. The Luftwaffe *Verordnungsblatt* announcing the award illustrates an actual example, so at least factory test strikings must have been made; but there seems to be no reliable evidence for any actual presentations – even though surviving award documents do specify the *Nahkampfspange 'der Luftwaffe'*, it is likely that the clasp actually received was the Army type.

The *Panzer Kampfabzeichen der Luftwaffe* was also instituted on 3 November 1944 and again, a sample was illustrated in the *Verordnungsblatt.* Two versions were authorised: one – for tank and tank recovery crews and attached medical personnel, who had participated in at least three engagements – with a silvered wreath and eagle and the central motif darkened; the other – with only the eagle silvered and the rest of the badge darkened, as here – for armoured reconnaissance, armoured infantry and attached medical personnel. Until that date eligible personnel had received the Army equivalent badge or the Ground Combat Badge. Clearly, 'HG' crews would have been among the principal recipients had this award actually been bestowed; but no evidence for any actual presentations has emerged, though it may have been awarded 'on paper'. On 10 November, additional patterns to recognise cumulative participation in further armoured actions were authorised; of slightly different design, these were to have small 'boxes' at the base numbered 25, 50, 75 or 100. There is no evidence for their actual production, although there may have been a few sample strikings.

On 10 November 1944 similarly numbered versions of the Ground Combat Badge were also authorised to mark accumulated 'combat days'. Many sources deny that any were actually made before May 1945, although examples do exist which match exactly the manufacturing style of known producers of the basic badge. Again, samples may have been produced but never issued. It seems likely that many men would have qualified for at least the '25' grade badge; but unfortunately, at least one alleged award document shown in a reference book has been established as a forgery, produced by altering a document for the basic badge.

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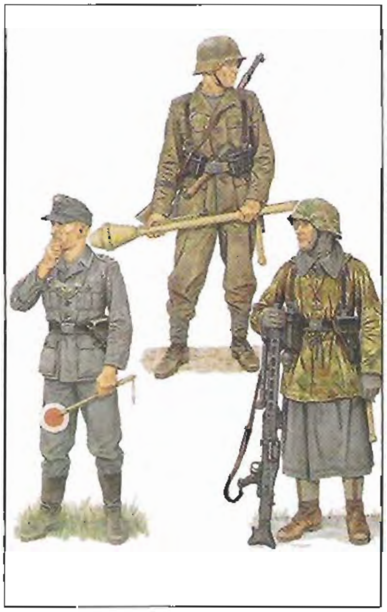

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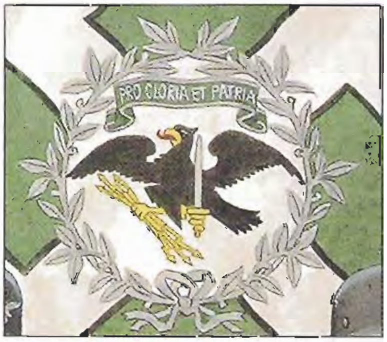

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